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fantastic

ADVENTURES



MINIONS
of the
TIGER

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By CHESTER S. GEIER

Presenting The Author



WILLIAM LAWRENCE HAMLING

WHEN a writer finishes a story and totals the wordage, quite often—all too often, in my case—he finds the yarn longer than he intended it to be. I suppose the same should hold true when he writes about himself. I'm supposed to fill a certain amount of space here, space about half the length of a short-short, yet strangely enough I don't know whether I'll be able to. It seems just a bit too much space in which to talk about myself.

Anyway, the "vital statistics" as *Esquire* would say, can be summed up very briefly—thank God: Age, 25; weight, 160; height, 5' 10"; sex, male, and as for the color of my hair and eyes, you shouldn't be interested, unless you happen to be a lovely female—blonde, brunette, or redhead—I'm not particular. Then I would be interested.

Along about 1939 I started beating words out on a typewriter and sold my first story. A lot of time was to elapse from then on, and a lot of world-shaking events were to occur, before I got back to writing and selling. (Apologies to Jack Woodford.) The major event, of course, happened to be a global struggle which you may have heard of. I had it drawn strongly to my

tion one morning in '42 when the postman brought me a letter of greetings—the only communication I ever expect to receive from a President of the United States.

So for around two years I found myself in uniform, graduating from a raw green yardbird into a seasoned all-wise lieutenant of infantry. (I have since decided both are more or less the same thing.) Then I had a little argument with a land mine. I seldom win an argument, and this particular case proved to be no exception. I woke up to that fact in a hospital. Eventually I was on my way home, and my uniform days became a bitter-sweet memory.

CONFRONTED once again with the sordid business of existence, I found myself on the well-known horns of a dilemma. I had to make a momentous decision—either become a writer or return to work. Being a naturally lazy person, I chose the course of least resistance, and once more started beating words out of my typewriter.

For some reason which I haven't been able to fathom as yet, Ray Palmer and Howard Browne—respectively ye Managing and Associate Editors of *FANTASTIC ADVENTURES*—liked these stories and told me to come again. In my humble opinion, Ray and Howard are the finest editors in the pulps today. It is my good fortune to be able to include them both among my close personal friends.

I'd already made contact with another old friend, Chester S. Geier, who owed me a couple of bucks—and . . . but I'll skip that, if you don't mind. Chet, as you may know, also writes detective and science-fantasy. I persuaded him to quit a job he was holding with a transport firm, and together we opened up an office on the North Side of Chicago. We've been here two years and hope to remain indefinitely.

One nice thing about having your own office is that you can come in late, loaf, and generally waste a lot of time. We manage to do a lot of all three. There's a sign on our office door which reads: "Hamling & Geier, Literary Productions." We've both been tempted many times to change it to "Literary Non-Productions." But with Ray and Howard to shake a reprimanding finger at us, we do manage to turn out quite a bit of work.

There are only two things I'd rather do than write—listen to classical music (of which I have an extensive collection), and play poker. The former I do with great pleasure, the latter with frequent regret. In between times I bowl and read Raymond Chandler, James M. Cain, and John Evans. It is my fond hope to some day climb as high as these boys have done.

Anyway, half as high.

—William Lawrence Hamling.



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ADVENTURES



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THE MIRROR

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It was just a plain mirror, and an old one. But it showed you the strangest things...

A VOICE FROM BEYOND

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When he walked over the X-ray cables, something happened to him. A voice called out...

I'LL TAKE THE SUBWAY

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If you owned a subway system you'd be a rich man. But can a dead man spend his money?

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Illustrated by Virgil Finlay

It was a world where women were forgotten. Teena set out to make the tyrants remember.

DUAL PERSONALITY

(Novelette—13,800) by Rog Phillips..... 150

Illustrated by William A. Gray

He was perfectly content to stay single. But then somebody doubled up inside him...

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Front cover painting by Arnold Kohn, illustrating a scene from "Minions Of The Tiger"

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1946

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VOLUME 8
NUMBER 4

The Editor's Notebook

A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT WITH THE EDITOR

WE'RE starting off this month with what we think is a pretty good yarn. It all started out with a front cover painting we had, and no story to go with it. Chester S. Geier came into our office one morning and happened to see it. (He couldn't help but see it because we shoved it right under his nose!) We asked Chet if the cover suggested anything to him. He said it did, and we took him at his word. The result is "Minions Of The Tiger," Geier's first novel length story in *Fantastic Adventures*. Chet is already one of your favorite authors, but after you finish reading this yarn we feel pretty safe in saying that you'll boost him right to the top of your "preferred writers" list.

WILLIAM LAWRENCE HAMLING, as we told you last month, is now Assistant Editor of your favorite magazine, (and we repeat that any kicks you've got—send them to Hamling!) but that hasn't stopped him from turning out some darn good stories. See if you don't agree after you've read his: "The Mirror," a clever little fantasy idea if we ever saw one. The mirror he writes about is something more than just a looking glass—but you read the story . . .

IF YOU'VE been reading our "big sister" magazine, *Amazing Stories* (and if you haven't, all we've got to say is you're missing a whale of a lot of fine entertainment), then you will know what we mean when we say that some people have a habit of hearing voices . . . Well, this month we're giving you a sample of what can happen to a man when he "hears" a voice, in John P. Lenahan's "A Voice From Beyond." Lenahan is a new writer to our pages, but he can handle words like a veteran. And incidentally, we would like to point out (in our own subtle way) that stories like this are not always fiction . . .

BERKELEY LIVINGSTON is no new name to you. In the past few years Livingston has gradually risen to the top ranks of your favorite writers. And he belongs there. There used to be a time when we would read every story he turned in before we bought them. But we've found out lately that it is just so much wasted effort. Take his "I'll Take The Subway" for instance. We first read it when we were putting the book together, and we got a big kick out of it. The story concerns a bum (Livingston says he likes to write about people he knows!) who bought the Chicago

subway system for a very paltry sum. At the time it seemed like a good investment, but then there was a little matter of dying to take care of before the investment showed a profit. We guarantee a lot of chuckles in this story!

LAST month we told you about the unfortunate and very untimely passing of one of your old favorites, Leroy Yerxa. We still haven't gotten over it, and like the passing of the "king," David Wright O'Brien, we doubt very much if we ever will. This month we're doling out to you one of the few remaining Yerxa stories from our files. "Taming Of The Tyrant" is a story of another world—one of the things Leroy enjoyed writing about most. It's the story of a world where men were men and women were—forgotten.

LAST, but certainly not least, we present a story by Rog Phillips, whose "Atom War" in one of the current issues of our companion magazine, *Amazing Stories* created quite a furor of interest. Phillips is a boy with quite a lot of good ideas, and this month we introduce him to you with a story called "Dual Personality." It concerns a man who went along all right until somebody tried to horn in on him. That part wouldn't have been so bad, but the "other person" horned in on this man's most prized possession—his body. And there was only room for one of them.

NEXT month we've got a number of real treats in store for you. Leading off will be a novel length story by William Lawrence Hamling that starts in a Chicago museum and ends up deep under the Sphinx in Egypt. That's all we'll tell you now, except that you'll meet a woman three thousand years old—and she claims (as all women do) that she isn't a day over twenty . . . There's a nice cover by J. Allen St. John that goes along with the story. Then there's a yarn by top-notch Robert Moore Williams about a little counterfeiter who could duplicate not only money, but other things too . . . Other stand-bys like Don Wilcox, Chester S. Geier, and Berkeley Livingston will also be on hand. And there'll also be a talented newcomer who we picked out of the slush pile. Her name is Margaret St. Clair and she tells the story of a rocket that went, of all places, to limbo. The only trouble was, nobody knew exactly how to get back. You'll like it . . . Which just about winds things up for this issue. See you next month.

Rap.



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He Was So Good to Her—Frank Sullivan
What Every Young Wife Should Know—Jas. Thurber
Bundling: An Old Yankee Custom

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MINIONS OF



By Chester S. Geier

It started out as a parlor stunt, a little game of hypnotism for laughs. But it wasn't very funny when the guests began to change—into tigers . . .

CHAPTER I

An Introduction

THE gate was locked, the headlights showed. Corbin-nosed his roadster close to the ornate iron

grille-work and drew to a stop. Leaning forward, he squinted through the headlight glare and into the velvety darkness beyond.

At the upper end of the driveway, through the branches of intervening trees, the lights of a house gleamed.

THE TIGER



Kumera reached for the amulet that would control the tiger men. But she was too late, as Amkeddar sprang at her.

There were enough lights to suggest that a party was going on, but Corbin wasn't entirely certain that he had reached his destination. Though Barton Melhorn had given explicit directions over the phone for finding the Castleton mansion, Corbin excused his hesitancy on the basis that he was as yet unfamiliar with Sylvan Heights, especially with the location of the homes of its various residents.

Beyond the gate, to the left of the driveway, was a small cottage, one of its lighted windows partly visible from where Corbin sat in the car. He decided it was the home of the caretaker, watchman, or whoever else it was that performed the ceremony of opening and closing the gate. The man would help to dispel his uncertainty. He pressed the car horn and sat back to await results.

Presently, he heard the sound of a door opening. Feet scraped on gravel. An elderly man in overalls moved into sight. He peered with narrowed eyes through the headlights, at Corbin.

"What do you want?"

"Is this the Castleton residence?" Corbin asked.

"That's right." The man narrowed his eyes a bit more. "What's your business, mister?"

Corbin felt a growing irritation. His plans for the day had gone awry enough, and the gate keeper's suspicious nature wasn't helping matters any. He answered with a sharpness unusual for him.

"I'm supposed to be a guest at the party Mrs. Castleton is throwing. It just happens that I'm late."

The gate keeper didn't seem to be impressed. "What's your name?"

"Corbin. Jeffrey Corbin. And now, by heaven, are you going to let me in, or do I still have to show you the birthmark on my right shoulder blade?"

"Guess it'll be all right," the gate keeper said evenly. Mrs. Castleton phoned me to expect a guy by the name of Corbin." He moved to the middle of the gate. A clicking sound followed, and shortly the barrier swung open.

CORBIN'S urge was to roar through, giving full vent to his annoyance, but the gate keeper's conduct puzzled him. There was a hint of mystery about it which Corbin could not by nature ignore. And his profession was one in which inquisitiveness paid dividends.

He controlled his first impulse, moving the roadster only far enough to reach the gate keeper's side. "Say, is there anything wrong? Or is it just that you've been seeing too many movies?"

"I don't know what you're talking about."

Corbin said patiently, "What I want to know is why you were asking all those questions a moment ago, if Mrs. Castleton phoned you to expect me. Is that a regular habit of yours, or is there anything going on?"

The gate keeper shifted his feet, glancing up the driveway, at the house. "Well, funny things have been happening in Sylvan Heights lately. Mighty funny things."

"What sort of things?" Corbin asked.

The lines of the gate keeper's leathery face tightened secretively. "You'll find out if you stay here long enough."

"You might drop a hint," Corbin prompted.

"All right, but I ain't going to say no more." The man leaned toward the car. "Folks in Sylvan Heights have seen tigers pussy-footing around late at night. Yes, tigers. Not harming anybody, you understand. But you can never tell what might happen."

Corbin grinned. "Interesting. But it should have been perfectly obvious to

you a while ago that I wasn't a tiger."

The gate keeper moved his bony shoulders uneasily. "Can't be too sure about that. Nope, can't be too sure at all."

Corbin stared for a moment, then fought a sudden urge to laugh. Sylvan Heights, an exclusive residential suburb inhabited by people who were as respectable as they were financially affluent, seemed the last place in the world where one would expect tigers to roam. Especially tigers who looked human and drove automobiles. The gate keeper's solemnity made it seem all the more ridiculous. Corbin decided that the man was suffering from the delusions of advancing age.

In spite of himself, he could not suppress a chuckle. "This is a new one on me," he told the gate keeper. "I've often been suspected of being a wolf—but never a tiger!" He waved a hand, got the roadster back into motion, and drove toward the house.

A LONG line of large, expensive-looking cars were parked at the upper end of the driveway. Corbin added his roadster to the end of the procession and set out to walk the remaining distance.

The mansion loomed up before him, a huge rambling building of gray sandstone, its many windows glowing with a festive brightness. He began to feel a little nervous. A rising young lawyer, he had grown accustomed to having wealthy people as his clients, but meeting them on a social level was another matter. He decided it was something he had to take in stride—particularly if he intended to see a lot of Doris Melhorn.

It had seemed too good to be true when the invitation had come from Barton Melhorn, Doris' father, to spend the week-end at his home in Sylvan

Heights. A short time previously, Corbin had fought to a successful conclusion a stiff legal battle for Melhorn. He had become acquainted with Doris while working on the case, and during the two weeks while the battle had raged in court, their acquaintance had grown into something alive, intimate, and all-absorbing. Doris, was sweet and unspoiled, with a simplicity and dignity of nature that had appealed to Corbin fully as much as her vivid loveliness.

Corbin had accepted the invitation eagerly. Immediate complications had arisen. Highlight of the week-end was to have a party given by Mrs. Horace Castleton, a wealthy and rather eccentric widow, who though somewhat notorious for her escapades, was renowned for her abilities at entertainment. A case had engaged Corbin's attention, which hadn't ended as soon as he expected it would, and it had seemed he wouldn't be able to make the party after all. Melhorn, however—spurred by Doris, as Corbin secretly hoped—had insisted on Corbin's presence, regardless of how late he might arrive. Since Melhorn insisted that the proper arrangements could easily be made, Corbin had given in.

Reaching the steps, Corbin paused a moment to straighten his evening tie and run a hand over his crisp, reddish-brown hair. Then, smoothing down his white flannel jacket, he felt more or less prepared for the ordeal he knew was ahead.

The door was ajar. The servants seemed busy elsewhere. Corbin strode into a huge, brightly-lighted hall. Conversation, laughter, and the clinking of glassware drifted to him from a broad doorway ahead and to the right. He walked forward hesitantly, skirting the foot of a massive marble inlaid stairway.

HE FOUND himself looking into a great, lavishly-decorated drawing room. The sound of voices washed over him in an almost tangible wave. Unconsciously, he wrinkled his nose against the miasma of liquor and cigaret smoke that filled the room. He ran his eyes over the two score or so of guests scattered about, searching for Doris.

"Oh, there you are! You're Jeffrey Corbin, aren't you?"

Somewhat startled, Corbin found himself looking down at a short, buxom woman in a strapless evening dress of a red color that seemed literally to shriek. Her plump figure was festooned with jewels.

Corbin bowed awkwardly. "And you're Mrs. Castleton?"

"Right the first time!" Mrs. Castleton extended a moist, ring-encrusted hand. "Put 'er there, Jeff!" The informal formalities over with, Mrs. Castleton put her hands on her broad hips and surveyed Corbin interestedly. "My! Doris must have been holding out on me. She never mentioned that you were so big and good-looking." She laughed loudly at his obvious embarrassment and took his arm. "Come on, Jeff, let me introduce you to the more important of the local gentry."

Except for one in particular, Corbin remembered few if any of the people he met that night. He shook what seemed an endless number of hands, grinned self-consciously into what seemed an endless number of faces, only to carry away the general impression that many of them belonged to persons highly important in political and financial circles. Mrs. Castleton amazed, awed, and bewildered him. Her introductions were accomplished by much back-slapping and raucous laughter, interspersed with ribald comments. And between times she kept up a running fire of talk that confused him

with its constant change of subjects.

At length, Corbin found himself being led to a corner of the room where a tall, dark man wearing a white turban seemed the focal point of interest for a group of excitedly chattering women.

"As they approached the gathering, Mrs. Castleton squeezed Corbin's arm. "And now, Jeff, I want you to meet Dr. Subhas Amkeddar. He's really the most exciting person!" Comes from India, you know."

Trailing Corbin in her wake, Mrs. Castleton elbowed her way through the gathering with all the vigor and dexterity of an experienced bargain shopper or football quarterback. Corbin found himself face to face with Dr. Subhas Amkeddar. The polite, somewhat weary smile with which he had prepared himself for the meeting faded from his features. With one of those strange, inexplicable quirks of human nature, he had taken a sudden and violent dislike to the man.

A PSYCHOLOGIST would have been at a loss to explain it clearly. There are instincts involved which are older than the race, running back to a time when our subhuman ancestors possessed a faculty bordering on a sixth-sense, which immediately indicated the presence of an enemy or a friend. Something of that sort may have been involved in Corbin's reaction to Dr. Subhas Amkeddar. He didn't seek to explain it to himself. He didn't even think about it consciously. He only knew, from the instant he set eyes on the Indian, that here was a man to despise, watch, and be wary of.

Dr. Subhas Amkeddar was a spare, elegant figure in faultlessly-tailored evening clothes. His features were saturnine, the face long, with gaunt hollows showing under high, jutting cheek-

bones, the skin leathery and dark with a typical Indian swarthinness. His thin lips were drawn in a politely quizzical smile, but his eyes, deep-set over the hawkish curve of his nose, showed a measuring aloofness in their glittering black depths. They were oddly compelling eyes, holding the glance with a power that was almost hypnotic.

The immediate impression which he gave was one of sleekness, of polished suavity. He seemed a cultured man of the world, well-bred, even aristocratic. With his white turban and mahogany skin, he was a veritable personification of the glamorous East. An objectively intent study of his face, however, showed certain other qualities not apparent at once. There was arrogance, a dominating will that sought its ends through craftiness and stealth. There was ruthlessness, a slumbering cruelty that might all too easily be awakened. And there was a suggestion of deep wisdom—but a wisdom of things strange and evil, that were old when the Western world was young.

A change came over Mrs. Castleton as she stood before Amkeddar. Her bearing became subdued, hesitant, almost servile.

The Indian watched her with a trace of condescension, toying with a massive gold ring which he wore on the middle finger of his right hand. The ring, Corbin noticed suddenly, had as its motif the head of a tiger. It seemed an appropriate ornament for Amkeddar to wear; there was something definitely tigerish about him.

Abruptly Corbin remembered the gatekeeper and his fantastic story of roaming tigers. Was there something to it after all? Was there even a connection with Amkeddar? Somehow the idea didn't seem to far-fetched to consider.

As Mrs. Castleton performed the in-

troductions, Amkeddar bowed deeply from the waist, murmuring acknowledgements in a resonant, musical voice that held a noticeable English accent. He didn't seem aware of Corbin's extended hand, managing to give onlookers the impression that his bow was a more than ample recognition of formalities. A faint mockery in his black eyes hinted that he was aware of Corbin's dislike, and that this was his answer to it.

CORBIN dropped his hand awkwardly, realizing that he had been made to look like a fool. His initial, inexplicable dislike for Amkeddar became a savage overpowering hatred. It was only with an effort that he kept himself from tearing at the other's throat. A warning sense rooted deep in prehistory told him that Amkeddar was dangerous, lethal as a coiled Cobra—something to be destroyed without hesitation or mercy.

There was a strained silence, which neither man made an effort to relieve. Mrs. Castleton filled the chasm between them with a torrent of gushy speech.

"Mr. Corbin came late," she explained confidingly, to Amkeddar. "But I'm so glad he could make the party. He's a lawyer, you know. He's spending the week-end—or what's left of it—as a guest of Mr. Melhorn."

Amkeddar's swarthy features showed a sudden interest. "Mr. Barton Melhorn, may I inquire?"

Mrs. Castleton nodded with a quickness which Corbin thought much like that of a servant eager to please. "That's right. You see, Mr. Corbin aided Mr. Melhorn in a frightfully important legal case. Why, I understand that millions of dollars were involved. Isn't that right, Jeffrey?"

Corbin shifted uncomfortably. He was plainly aware that Mrs. Castleton

was making a fool of herself. He wondered if Amkeddar had that effect on all women. He much preferred the boisterous, unrestrained Mrs. Castleton of several minutes before to the pathetic, subservient woman of the present. He answered:

"Millions of dollars is an exaggeration, I'm afraid. It was actually considerably less than that."

Mrs. Castleton shook his arm in playful chiding. "You're too modest, Jeffrey! How do you expect to win a girl like Doris if you're going to be so shy?"

Amkeddar's interest became intense. Outwardly he remained casual and urbane, but his black eyes became sharp and predatory.

"Indeed?" he murmured. "Mr. Corbin, I take it, is . . . ah . . . romantically inclined toward Miss Melhorn?"

CORBIN'S glance narrowed on the other. He knew suddenly that the question wasn't as innocent as it seemed. The fact that Amkeddar had asked it at all showed he was interested in Doris. He had obviously met her earlier in the evening, and had been greatly attracted by her. Corbin became grimly aware that he had a rival in Amkeddar—a rival who was fascinating to women, who gave strong indications of being a person who would stop at nothing to gain his ends.

Corbin wondered in sudden anxiety about Doris. What were her reactions to Amkeddar? Was she as much charmed by him as the others seemed to be?

Beside him, Mrs. Castleton laughed. "Romantically inclined? From the way Jeffrey's been looking around for Doris ever since he arrived, I'd say that was certainly the case! Well, I'd better not keep him any longer." She excused herself—something she hadn't bothered to do with the other guests—and tugged

at Corbin's arm.

The last he saw as he was led away was Amkeddar's eyes, cold and menacingly hostile. He knew that he had made an enemy.

CHAPTER II

Parlor Stunt Sinister

DORIS and her father were chatting with a group of acquaintances at one side of the room when Corbin and Mrs. Castleton finally reached them. Corbin forgot Amkeddar as he saw the welcoming brightness which appeared in Doris' tawny, gold-flecked eyes.

"I'm glad you could get here, Jeff," she said simply. Her soft, slightly husky voice contained a warmth which gave her words a special significance. She was slim and lovely in a simple evening dress of dark green crepe. Her face was fresh and vivid in its frame of lustrous, coppery brown hair.

"I echo Doris' sentiment," Barton Melhorn chuckled, as he shook Corbin's hand. He winked jovially. "That's all I seem to be doing lately, anyway." Melhorn was a little over average height, slender, with a wiry athletic build. He had crisp, grizzled hair, and the keen, dynamic features one would expect of a top-flight business executive.

Mrs. Castleton put in, "Sorry I kept Jeff so long. I wanted him to meet the crowd." She waved a plump hand, once more her old, unrestrained self. "I've got to scoot. It's time I got the entertainment started."

Corbin was not to be left alone with Doris, as he had hoped. Melhorn claimed his attentions for the moment, introducing him to the people with whom he had been conversing. One of them proved to be Melhorn's sister, Nora, a prim-looking spinster, who

seemed a feminine edition of Melhorn himself.

Before Corbin completely realized what was happening, he found himself drawn into a discussion of the legal case which he had won for Melhorn. Belatedly remembering Doris, he was dismayed to find that she had moved. His dismay increased when he found her standing a short distance away, about to accept a Martini from a suavely smiling Amkeddar.

Corbin could see Doris' face only in profile. She seemed to be smiling, listening in complete interest to whatever Amkeddar had to say. As Corbin watched, he saw the girl begin to sip from her glass. Amkeddar glanced suddenly in Corbin's direction, his dark face mocking, and his black eyes bright with a strange triumph.

ANGER seared through Corbin. Again he experienced an overwhelming urge to get his hands on Amkeddar's lean throat. With an effort, he got himself under control. Deliberately, he turned his back on Amkeddar and the girl, devoting his attention to the people before him.

Presently, the group broke up. Corbin found himself alone with Melhorn. He asked:

"Have you met Dr. Subhas Amkeddar?"

Melhorn smiled wryly. "I'll say I have! The fellow seems to be Mrs. Castleton's particular pet. The same might be said for most of the other women here. Even Nora, my sister, seemed greatly taken with him."

"I gather that you don't think very highly of Dr. Amkeddar," Corbin said, with an answering grin.

"Hardly!" Melhorn grunted. "He's a smooth scoundrel if I ever saw one. I'd say he's well worth keeping a careful eye on."

"What sort of a doctor is he? What's his field?"

"Dashed if I know, Jeff? From what I've heard he's supposed to be a scientist of some kind. Research work. He's been living in Sylvan Heights only a little more than two months. Lives in a large, walled-in estate on Cedar Road, about a half-mile from my place. Just met him tonight, though." Melhorn looked about him slowly, then drew closer to Corbin.

"Don't think me an old gossip, Jeff, but I've talked with several acquaintances about Amkeddar. I've learned some rather interesting things. It seems that he's been receiving a lot of visitors lately. Nothing in that, you might say—but these visits are made late at night, between certain hours, on certain days. Mostly women. The bored, over-moneyed sort who go for anything providing novelty or thrills."

"Do you know what might be going on?"

"No. Something queer, however, you can bet."

A voice rose suddenly above the general hubub. It was that of Mrs. Castleton, who stood on a chair in the middle of the room.

"Friends, Romans, and gentlemen farmers, lend me your ears! Will everybody please find seats? We're going to have a little fun."

The announcement was followed by an excited murmuring. Mrs. Castleton was widely-known for the strange twists in entertainment given at her parties. The guests were curious to know what she had in mind tonight. They sought chairs at the edges of the room in eager haste. A momentary confusion reigned.

CORBIN felt a hand touch his arm as he and Melhorn turned to find seats. It was Doris. He was delighted

to have her back at his side, but a restraint held him at the memory of her talking with Amkeddar.

Doris' face was shadowed, strained. Her smile at Corbin seemed to take an effort. "Forgive me for running off, Jeff. I went to say hello to some friends, and Dr. Amkeddar, the lady-killer, collared me. I had to drink a Martini to get rid of him—and I particularly detest Martinis. That one had an awful taste."

Relief swept Corbin. "For a while I thought you were as susceptible to his charms as the other women here. Glad to know I'm wrong."

Doris suppressed a shudder. "Amkeddar leaves me cold, I assure you. There's something nasty and mean about him that—Oh, I can't explain it. But I'm afraid of him, Jeff. The way he looks at me . . ."

"If he bothers you just let me know," Corbin said grimly. "I'd like an excuse to wipe that smug, superior look off his face."

Most of the people were already seated. Becoming aware of this, Corbin hastily took Doris' arm and led her toward a couple of chairs which were as yet unoccupied. The babble slowly gave way to an expectant silence.

From her perch on the chair, Mrs. Castleton launched into an explanation of her program. "All right, folks. Tonight we're going to have something a little extra special. The guests themselves are going to provide the fun. I'm going to pass out numbered cards. When a corresponding number is drawn, some lucky guest will have a chance to step out and strut his stuff. Anything goes, as long as it's entertaining and within the limits of Emily Post."

Gasps of delight and cries of dismay followed. Mrs. Castleton's idea was far from being new, but it was novel

enough as far as her guests were concerned. They were of the type accustomed to being entertained rather than doing the entertaining themselves.

Servants began to move among the guests, passing out the numbered cards. The drawing room became filled with an atmosphere of nervous anticipation.

"What will you do if your number is called?" Doris asked Corbin.

He frowned deeply in mock-concentration. "Hm-m-m . . . I'm a lawyer, so I guess I'll give a burlesque of a courtroom scene, pretending to cross-examine a witness. How about you?"

Doris grimaced. "That's what I'm worrying about. I can play a sizzling game of tennis or golf, fry a mean egg, or read my weight in books, but that's about all. I wish I were able to do something really artistic at times like this. Like playing that beautiful piano Mrs. Castleton has over there. But I've never had enough of an artistic urge to get started. A disappointing person, aren't I?"

"I don't think so," Corbin reassured her. "Artistic women are usually too conceited to be entirely human. I like tennis and golf, and I'm crazy about eggs."

"Not really?" Doris mocked, though her tawny eyes were soft. She spread her hands helplessly. "But what am I going to do, Jeff?"

"Why not pretend to fry an egg? You know—everything wrong."

"That's an ideal! I'm in your debt, Jeff."

"I certainly won't forget to collect!"

Mrs. Castleton had climbed down from her chair, and a bowl filled with numbered squares had been placed upon it. She raised her hands for silence.

"All ready now. When your number's called, step into the middle of the room and go into your act. The penalty

for failing to produce will be three loud boo's, with everybody joining in."

AMID general laughter and apprehensive comment, she reached into the bowl. The first number called was that of a stout, elderly woman, who gave a quite creditable imitation of a much-publicized moving picture actress. The next, a scholarly-looking, bespectacled young man, obviously stricken with a severe case of self-consciousness, stammered an apology. He was loudly booed. The following victim, a waggish-looking oldster, was more fortunate. He told a joke that was received with much laughter and hand-clapping. The tension began to lift as the guests entered more and more into the spirit of the game.

Corbin's enjoyment, however, suffered an early blow. He noticed Amkeddar seated across the room. The Indian was watching Doris. Slyly, pretending an interest in the game, he was drinking in every move she made. His black eyes glittered with a hungry intentness that made Corbin almost sick with fury.

After a moment, Amkeddar became aware of Corbin's scrutiny. Abrupt defiance leaped out on his mahogany-hued features. A venomous glare of anger followed. Then as Amkeddar's cunning mind evidently appraised the situation, he smiled mockingly.

It was a challenge, Corbin knew. Amkeddar was admitting his interest in Doris, and was asking in effect what Corbin was going to do about it. Corbin realized he could do nothing in present circumstances without making himself look bad-natured, unmannerly, and a fool. Amkeddar knew that. And awareness that the Indian held the upper hand, even though in a purely psychological sense, made Corbin seethe with impotent rage.

The game was in full swing now. One woman sang a popular song. Another danced. Then Mrs. Castleton reached into the bowl again.

"Number twenty-two!" she called out.

Amkeddar rose smoothly to his feet. "That is my number, I believe." With a self-assured smile, he advanced to the middle of the room. A deep silence fell at his appearance. The assemblage watched him with an attentiveness which had not been accorded previous performers. Amkeddar was mystery, romance. In every mind was intense curiosity as to what he would give as his act.

Satisfied that he had the complete interest of his audience, Amkeddar began speaking in confident, resonant tones. "What I shall do will be considered extremely unusual, even questionable. But it will be interesting, and I assure you, quite harmless. I intend to give an exhibition of hypnotism. I shall select as my subject"—he glanced momentarily around the room—"Miss Doris Melhorn."

Corbin felt a sudden wrench of horror. Doris clutched his arm. "Oh, Jeff!" Her voice was sharp with dismay.

Corbin stood up purposefully. "For personal reasons, I shall have to protest Dr. Amkeddar's choice of Miss Melhorn. Besides, Miss Melhorn herself is averse to the idea. May I suggest that Dr. Amkeddar make another selection?"

MRS. CASTLETON bustled forward. She said chidingly. "Jeffrey, don't be so childish. It's all in fun. Dr. Amkeddar has given his promise that it will be quite harmless. Isn't that right, Doctor?"

Amkeddar nodded with a humoring smile. "Quite right. Mr. Corbin's fears are groundless. I should like to say

same for Miss Melhorn."

The guests added their own insistences. Angrily, Corbin realized that Doris had been chosen as a scapegoat. None of the others were willing to be hypnotized. Doris offered each of them a way out.

Against concerted opposition, Corbin was helpless. He gave in. Reseating himself, he glanced at Barton Melhorn, seated in a nearby chair. Melhorn shrugged, frowning. Apparently, he didn't like the idea any more than Corbin did, admitting his own inability to do anything about it.

Like a high priestess leading a victim to sacrifice, Mrs. Castleton took Doris' arm and ushered her to where Amkeddar stood. Then she drew aside.

Amkeddar smiled encouragingly. "Relax, Miss Melhorn. If your mind is rigid with apprehension, hynosis will be impossible." In his deep, musical voice, he added further reassurances. The rhythm of his words slowed imperceptibly. Slowly, gradually, his tone took on increasingly depth and power. His black eyes were fixed compellingly upon Doris' tawny ones. It was all-very-subtle. The girl was being hypnotized even before she completely realized it was taking place.

A cold, heavy lump formed in Corbin's chest. The impossible was happening. Or else scientists were wrong. Or perhaps Amkeddar possessed a forcefulness, an almost superhuman will. Doris didn't want to be hypnotized. Unconsciously, with all her strength, she was resisting. But inexorably Amkeddar was hypnotizing her.

The guests were silent and motionless, fascinatedly watching. Amkeddar's long thin fingers began to writhe and sway like tiny dark snakes before Doris' eyes. He spoke softly, almost inaudibly, murmuring words which

Corbin could not understand. Strange, foreign-sounding words. Doris' eyes were wide and unblinking. They seemed a clear, glowing yellow, almost weirdly luminous. Cat's eyes, Corbin thought suddenly. *Tiger's eyes*. And for an insane moment it seemed to him that the head of a tiger was mirrored in their golden depths. A reflection of Amkeddar—of the will, the spirit, he was imposing on her.

CORBIN got himself in hand. He decided he was imagining things. His anxiety for Doris had made him over-wrought, susceptible to delusions.

Finally Amkeddar dropped his hands and stepped back. Doris stood rigid and unmoving, staring straight before her as though into immense-distances.

Amkeddar glanced speculatively about the room. His eyes settled upon the piano. He turned back to Doris.

"Miss Melhorn, can you play the piano?"

Her eyelids did not flicker. "No, I cannot play the piano." Her voice sounded small and remote.

"But you can play if I say that you can."

"Yes, I can play."

"Then you will seat yourself before the piano. You will play—" Amkeddar turned to the watching guests. "Will someone be so kind as to suggest a suitable composition?"

A man named a selection from Chopin. Amkeddar asked Doris, "Are you familiar with this composition, Miss Melhorn?"

"I have heard it, but I cannot recall it clearly."

"You will play it."

"Yes. Doris walked slowly over to the piano and sat down. Her slim fingers poised over the keys. She hesitated a moment, then began to play.

Whispers of astonishment were ex-

changed among the guests. Doris hadn't been able to play the piano, hadn't remembered clearly the composition which had been named. But she was playing it—and it was beautiful playing.

Corbin's mind flamed with wonder. Something was happening that smacked of magic—something which couldn't be explained in terms of Western knowledge. Science would have said it was impossible. Nothing can come from the human mind that has not already been stored there. But Doris who could not play the piano was playing it; playing a selection from Chopin that was vague in her memory.

Corbin's wonder abruptly vanished as a hand touched his shoulder, startling him. He turned to look into the face of a man seated behind him, leaning forward. The other wore an air of surreptitious confiding. He spoke softly, his voice audible only to Corbin.

"If I were you, I'd watch Dr. Subhas Amkeddar very carefully. A while ago, I saw him drop something into a drink he gave Miss Melhorn."

Corbin was shocked. "You're certain?"

"Positive. I have good eyes, and I'm not a busybody trying to stir up trouble. Dr. Amkeddar is up to something where Miss Melhorn is concerned. Watch him." The man sat back, his features turning impassive.

CORBIN felt dazed, stunned. Amkeddar had dropped something into the Martini which Doris had drunk. Corbin remembered Doris' remark about the Martini having an awful taste. Did whatever Amkeddar had placed in it explain his complete hypnotic control over Doris? To Corbin, the whole affair suddenly seemed a cunning and shrewdly laid plan. He wondered if Amkeddar hadn't suggested

the game to Mrs. Castleton with the idea of exerting his evil influence on Doris.

Fear laid icy fingers upon him. He realized that Amkeddar had just gotten started in whatever devilish scheme he had made. What would he do next?

Doris finished playing the composition. At a command from Amkeddar, she rose. He waved his hands before her face again, murmuring unintelligibly. The alertness of self-will crept back into Doris' eyes. She looked about her bewilderedly, like one having awakened from a deep sleep. Nervously, she nodded at Amkeddar and returned to her chair beside Corbin.

There was a patter of applause. The guests had been entertained more than satisfactorily, and were registering their approval. The sinister nuances of the act had been completely lost upon them.

Corbin asked Doris anxiously, "How do you feel?"

"I can't exactly explain. I feel all right, but my thoughts. . . . It's as though something had stirred them up and they haven't stopped whirling around yet."

Her confused state did not wear off. Made aware of it by Corbin, Melhorn decided that she needed a night's rest. Preparations were made for leaving.

Mrs. Castleton was solicitous. "There's nothing wrong, I hope? It's rather early to leave."

"Doris isn't feeling well," Melhorn explained, a distinct coolness in his voice. "It would really be best for her to be put to bed."

"She's just nervous," Mrs. Castleton said. "She'll be all right in the morning."

Under his breath, Corbin muttered, "She'd better be!"

After a restrained exchange of good-night's, they strode out of the house and

toward the line of parked cars. Melhorn rode with his sister, Nora. Corbin followed in his roadster with Doris.

"Feel any better?" Corbin asked after a while, when he felt that the girl had been exposed sufficiently to the cool night air rushing past the speeding car.

"I think so. My mind seems to have calmed a little, anyway. But, Jeff, I think I know what's wrong now. It's as though a part of me had been captured—trapped. And I feel helpless . . . as if there were things I had to do that I can't remember." She drew closer to him, shivering. "It's all so strange. . . . Jeff—I'm afraid!"

CHAPTER III

Tiger Tracks

A SHRILL cry awakened Corbin. He rose to a sitting position on the bed, instantly awake, listening tensely.

"Barton! Barton!" It was Nora Melhorn's voice, high-pitched with urgent fear.

Corbin heard the patter of feet running down the hall. Then there was the staccato tattoo of knuckles beating against a door.

Barton Melhorn's voice sounded. "Nora? For heaven's sake, what is it?"

"It's Doris! She's . . . she's gone!"

Corbin listened no further. A hand of ice gripping his heart, he tumbled out of bed and hurried into his robe. As he burst into the hall, he almost collided with the butler and the maid, who had come rushing from their rooms below. Melhorn, framed in the light from his room, was listening to Nora. She was babbling an explanation, her words rushing over each other.

"—worried about her, and I went to her room to see how she was sleeping. And she wasn't there? The windows were open. She must have gone out

herself—or . . . or someone carried her away!"

Noticing Corbin, Melhorn nodded. "You heard?"

"Yes. Where's Doris' room?"

"Downstairs. She preferred it because it opened on the garden."

"Take me there—quick! If we're not too late, we may be able to find some indication of what happened to her."

"Just a moment." Melhorn ducked back into his room. When he reappeared, he was holding a flashlight in one hand and a revolver in the other. He jerked his head at Corbin. "Come on, Jeff."

The door of Doris' room was open. Hurrying in, Melhorn switched on the lights.

Corbin glanced at the bed. It had been slept in, but not otherwise disarranged, as would have happened in case of a struggle. The indications were that Doris had left voluntarily.

Beyond the bed was a line of French windows, partially ajar to permit entrance of the cool night breeze. One of the windows was opened a little more than the others, Corbin noticed. He strode toward it, emerging upon a stone terrace. A large garden spread before him, ghostly in the pale, silver light of the Moon. He turned as he became aware that Melhorn had followed. He asked:

"May I borrow your flashlight a moment?"

"Of course, Jeff."

CORBIN climbed over the terrace balustrade and dropped down into the shrubbery below. With the flashlight, he carefully examined the ground. After a moment he released a sharp exclamation of surprise. There were tracks in the soil—footprints of the size that a woman would have made,

mingled with the pawprints of an animal. Corbin's lips tightened as he recognized these latter. They were the tracks of a tiger.

Straightening, Corbin related his discovery to Melhorn.

"A tiger!" Melhorn gasped. "You must be mistaken, Jeff. It . . . it's impossible!"

"Take a look yourself, then."

Melhorn dropped down beside Corbin. He examined the prints with a flashlight which he had obtained from the butler. His eyes widened. "You're right! Those are tiger tracks. But a tiger—in Sylvan Heights. . . ."

Corbin's lips were stiff and dry. He said quickly, "The gun. Give it to me. We've got to search the garden."

Utter horror dawned in Melhorn's face. "Lord!" he whispered. "Lord! Jeff, you don't think Doris may have been . . . hurt?"

"I'm afraid to think. I'm going to look—but I'm not going to think. If anything has happened to her. . . ."

Slowly and warily, they began the search, peering into patches of moonlight, probing with their flashlight beams deep shadows among the shrubbery. They saw nothing, heard nothing, indicative of the lurker they sought. There was just the scraping of branches moving in the breeze, the rustling whisper of leaves.

The revolver butt was hard and clammy in Corbin's hand. In his chest was a stifled pounding. Doris, he thought. Doris—If anything had happened to her. . . . He fought down his anxiety in the urgency of the task at hand. He had to be fully alert. Somewhere a tiger might be crouching over its prey. At any moment there might be a deep, animal growl, the swift pad-pad of paws, a lithe, tawny form leaping from the gloom.

But as the tense minutes passed,

nothing happened. Corbin and Melhorn returned to their starting point, having made a complete circuit of the grounds surrounding the house. Despite the thoroughness of their search, they had found nothing which would show that a struggle had taken place. There were no spatters of blood anywhere, no shreds of torn cloth.

Melhorn said slowly, "I don't know what to make of this, Jeff, unless it's that Doris wandered off somewhere and the tiger followed her."

"But why should she have wandered off in the first place?" Corbin demanded. "It was hardly the time of night for going anywhere. And she wasn't dressed for it. You've seen her footprints. Her feet were bare. For another thing, if the two sets of tracks were made at the same time—as I'm pretty sure they were—instead of at an interval, why should the tiger merely have followed her? Why didn't it attack at once, here, in the garden?"

MELHORN passed a hand over his face in agitated perplexity. "I don't know, Jeff. Lord, I don't know. The whole thing is impossible—insane! A tiger in Sylvan Heights . . . Doris wandering from her room—"

Corbin's thoughts raced grimly. On the surface, the circumstances of Doris' disappearance were so strange and fantastic as almost to be without meaning. But somewhere, he was sure, were details which would fit everything into a logical pattern. Details that were recent, still fresh in memory, needing only to be sorted out and arranged. Carefully, he went over the events of the previous evening, searching for evidence which would give his vague but inescapable certainty a basis in fact.

Abruptly, almost irrelevantly, he thought of Amkeddar. He stiffened as though from the shock of an electric

current. Amkeddar! In a flash of realization, the mystery of Doris' disappearance seemed suddenly clear.

Melhorn gestured helplessly. "There's only one thing left to do, Jeff. We'll have to call in the police. They may be able to find what happened to Doris."

"It won't be necessary to call them," Corbin said. "I'm pretty sure I know where Doris can be found."

"What do you mean?" Melhorn questioned, staring. "How can you possibly know?"

Swiftly, Corbin explained, building up detail by detail a complete picture which previously his mind had encompassed in an instant. He repeated the strange story about roaming tigers told by the gate-keeper at the Castleton estate, a story borne out by the tracks which he and Melhorn had found in the garden. He mentioned the ring with its tiger head motif worn by Amkeddar, which suggested that the Indian was in some way connected with tigers. And he told of Amkeddar's consuming interest in Doris, which had led him to choose her as a subject for his exhibition of hypnotism, after having previously dropped something into a drink he had given her. He finished:

"Considering these facts, the only place to which Doris could have gone is to where Amkeddar lives. It's all part of a devilish and cunning plan. Doris attracted Amkeddar, but he knew, unlike the other women at the party, that she disliked and feared him. How to remove these feelings? How to make it possible for him to see her? Through hypnotism, of course. But first he had to make her susceptible to his influence, or it wouldn't work. He accomplished this by dropping some sort of drug into her Martini. And once he had her hypnotized—you've heard of post-hypnotic suggestion? Imposing upon a hypno-

tized person an order which he will follow later, when released from the trance?"

MELHORN nodded jerkily; his face pale and drawn.

"That's why Doris left the house," Corbin went on. "Amkeddar had impressed the command upon her mind while he had her hypnotized. What else would explain it? Why else would she have gone out at this time of the night, in her bare feet?"

"But the tiger tracks, Jeff. How do you explain them?"

Corbin said with grim earnestness, "The tiger was sent to see that Doris did what she was supposed to do, or to lead her to where she was supposed to go."

"Why, that's utterly impossible!" Melhorn protested unbelievably. "Jeff, have you gone mad?"

"Not at all. Look here, I'm not an expert tracker, but I'm quite certain that the prints we found of Doris and the tiger were made at the same time. All right, if it was an ordinary kind of tiger, why wasn't Doris attacked? The fact that she wasn't, the fact that a tiger should be present in Sylvan Heights of all, shows it wasn't an ordinary kind of tiger. Is it too fantastic, then, to suppose that its purpose had been to lead her somewhere?"

Melhorn ran a hand agitatedly through his hair. "Lord, I don't know! But, Jeff, you think that Amkeddar is mixed up in it?"

"I'm positive!"

"Then we'd better call the police . . ."

Corbin laughed shortly. "Do you think they'd believe our reasons for wanting them to search Amkeddar's home? They'd think we were either drunk or crazy. At best, they only send someone here to check our story.

That would waste too much time. No—if anything is going to be done about Amkeddar, we'll have to do it ourselves."

"But what can we possibly do, Jeff?"

"We'll drive over to Amkeddar's place and tell him that Doris has disappeared—apparently having wandered away in her sleep. We'll explain that we came to him because we thought his hypnotizing of Doris may have been responsible. That'll give us an excuse to search his house. If nothing else, our suspicions will warn him to leave Doris alone."

Melhorn straightened purposefully. "All right. I'll get dressed."

"Meet me in ten minutes," Corbin said. "We'll take my car."

CHAPTER IV

Dr. Amkeddar Is Unwilling

MELHORN pointed through the windshield of the speeding roadster. "There, Jeff! That's where Amkeddar lives."

Corbin nodded, squinting through the glare of the headlights. Down the road ahead, drawing swiftly closer, loomed a high concrete wall. It looked grim and forbidding, the sort of wall that might very well have encircled a prison. Hardly as neat and well-tended, however, it was striated with cracks and covered thickly with vines.

Corbin smiled thinly. "That wall is just what I'd have expected of Amkeddar. Anything could go on behind it, and nobody would be the wiser."

Reaching the wall, he slowed the roadster. Presently he saw an opening about half-way down its length, barred by a high iron gate. Beside the gate, he drew to a stop. He eyed the barrier calculatingly a moment, then glanced at Melhorn.

"I'd like to get in without giving Amkeddar a chance to cover up. The gate-man is certain to obtain his approval before admitting us."

Melhorn said quietly, "This should help, Jeff." He extended the revolver.

Corbin took it; the lines of his face tight and determined. Dropping the gun into a pocket of his jacket, he slipped from the car and strode up to the gate. A large house bulked like a sleeping monster on the grounds beyond. No lights showed behind its many windows. Nearby was a smaller building, which to Corbin seemed too large to be a garage. Light glowed behind a small, barred window set high in one wall. In the illumination of the Moon, the grounds looked wild and unkept, almost jungle-like. Corbin wondered if Amkeddar was as neglectful about other aspects of his living conditions. Or was there a purpose in his leaving the grounds untended? Something connected with his experiments?

Corbin returned his thoughts to the problem of getting through the gate. Climbing over was out of the question, as Melhorn wouldn't have been able to make it. And if Amkeddar had guards posted—a not too remote possibility—Corbin didn't want to take the risk of getting shot. Being admitted seemed the best way. But—how to attract the attention of the gatekeeper without warning Amkeddar of his presence?

His problem was unexpectedly solved. Materializing like a wraith out of the darkness, a man moved abruptly into sight behind the gate, startling him.

THE headlights of the roadster, pointing down the road, provided enough illumination for Corbin to make out details. The man, he saw, was an Indian like Amkeddar, hawk-featured and swarthy, a turban wound about his

head. Corbin realized that the man must have been patrolling the grounds, having been attracted by the lights of the car. Corbin wondered grimly why Amkeddar should have guards on duty. What was he trying to protect—or hide?

His awareness centered sharply on the guard. The other inclined his turbaned head slightly, liquid dark eyes calculating and alert.

"What *Sahib* want?" he asked in a soft, accented voice.

Corbin said, "I'd like to see Dr. Amkeddar. It's very important."

"If *Sahib* will give name. . . ."

"That and the nature of my business is something I can tell only Dr. Amkeddar."

"Much regret, *Sahib*. I have order. You must give name."

Corbin decided that his pretended mysteriousness needed a little acting to make it more effective. He glanced fearfully up and down the road, then turned back to the guard as though unable to conceal any longer his impatience and anxiety. "Listen—we're wasting precious time. This is a matter of life or death, I tell you. I must see Dr. Amkeddar at once. Later you may be sorry that you kept me waiting so long."

The Indian worried his lip indecisively. Finally he shook his head. "I have order, *Sahib*. I must tell Master, give name."

Corbin glanced at the road again. His assumed impatience turned suddenly to a display of anger. "Are you stupid?" he demanded. "It would take too long to tell Dr. Amkeddar. I can't wait out here on the road, in plain sight. At least you could let me in—where I'll be safe."

The guard shuffled his feet in a turmoil of doubt. Sensing an advantage, Corbin reached quickly for his billfold,

removed a large bill, and thrust it through the gate.

"Look—I'll take the blame, but if Dr. Amkeddar should still be angry with you, this should make it easier. I've just got to see Dr. Amkeddar at once."

The Indian eyed the bill with evident greed. As though drawn to it irresistibly, his lean dark hand reached out. Then he suddenly snatched it back. The greed vanished from his face, leaving stark fear. "No . . . I cannot! I cannot! The Master, he would . . . he—" The Indian broke off, his face working like one who has seen a vision of nightmare horror.

A FINGER of ice seemed to draw itself along Corbin's spine. Thoughtfully, he replaced the bill. In the guard's reaction he saw a hand that was harsh and cruel, utterly without mercy and tolerance. The influence of Amkeddar over his servants revealed new insight on the character of the man.

Plainly, admission was not to be accomplished by guile. That left only one thing to do, if Amkeddar were still to be taken by surprise. In a swift movement, Corbin pulled the revolver from his pocket and leveled it at the guard.

"I told you I haven't any time to waste. This will prove it. Now—are you going to let me in, or do I have to shoot holes in your legs to force you?"

The Indian looked at the gun. His features cleared in something that was almost relief. He had been given a way out. His orders did not hold up under an immediate threat of being crippled. Producing a key from a pocket of his rough, dark suit, he unlocked the gate.

Gesturing the guard into the car beside Melhorn, Corbin mounted the running board, revolver pointed alertly.

Melhorn drove up a long gravel driveway, drawing to a stop before the larger of the two buildings. Corbin prodded the Indian out before him and strode to the door. After a moment's search he found the bell and pressed it. Tensely he waited. The guard stood by, stolidly quiet.

A muffled growl lifted suddenly on the night air. Despite his preparedness for anything in the way of danger, Corbin's muscles perked. That had been an animal growl, he realized—the sort of sound that a tiger would have made. As he listened, the growl was repeated. It came, he discovered, from the adjoining, small building. He recalled the lighted window he had seen while at the gate.

An abrupt clicking noise from behind the door brought Corbin whirling around. The portal swung open. Light from the hall showed a woman standing at the threshold. Like Amkeddar and the guard, she was an Indian. A scarlet *sari* had been thrown hastily over her shoulders and draped over her long, glistening black hair. She was attractive in a mature, darkly exotic way.

The woman looked inquiringly from the guard to Corbin. Then she saw the gun in Corbin's hand. Her large, liquid eyes widened slightly, but whatever she felt of surprise and fear was well controlled.

"What is the meaning of this?" she asked quietly. Her English was faultless. It contained nothing of the studied British accents affected by Amkeddar.

In some inexplicable way, Corbin found himself drawn to the woman. Her eyes were steady and clear, her bearing eloquent of a character too frank and courageous to have in it anything of evil. He said:

"I want you to take me to Dr. Amkeddar. It's very important."

"May I ask why you should need a gun?"

CORBIN grinned slightly. "My reason for wanting to see him is that important. I can't waste any time on formalities. Everyone insists on making me wait."

The woman said, "Dr. Amkeddar is in the . . . his laboratory. He is at work."

"The building over there?"

She nodded slowly.

Corbin gestured with the gun. It was his intention to march the woman and the guard to the laboratory building. The next instant he stiffened, his plan forgotten. From the direction of the laboratory had come the sound of a closing door. Then followed the crunch of feet on gravel. Amkeddar moved into view, hurrying toward the house. At sight of Corbin and Melhorn, in the doorway, he stopped.

"Who . . . why, it's Mr. Corbin! And Mr. Melhorn! I thought I heard a car drive up. This is a nice surprise." As he approached, he became suddenly aware of the gun in Corbin's hand. He gave no indication of being alarmed or otherwise disconcerted. Apparently he had already realized that the presence of Corbin and Melhorn at the house, without his being warned of their arrival, meant that they had used force to gain entry. He said with thinly veiled sarcasm:

"Do you usually arm yourself with a gun when calling on people, Mr. Corbin?"

"That depends on the people," Corbin said.

Amkeddar's thin lips lifted in a sardonic smile. In the light streaming through the open doorway he looked like a grimly amused Satan. "That, I take it, is a sample of what is termed repartee. Very witty. . . . I am not

unacquainted with American laws, Mr. Corbin. Since you are a lawyer, I need hardly point out that this invasion of my property is anything but legal."

Corbin jerked his shoulders impatiently. "I'm fully aware of the matter. Your property is safe enough. What I'm here for is something that doesn't belong to you—which gives me sufficient justification for my actions."

"Indeed? And what might that be?"

"Doris. Where is she? What have you done with her?"

Amkeddar arched his black brows. "Doris? I presume you mean Miss Doris Melhorn?"

"I don't mean anyone else!" Corbin grunted.

"I fear that I do not understand. Are you insinuating that I have done something with Miss Melhorn?"

"I'm more than fairly certain that you have. Doris vanished from her room earlier in the night. Indications are that she did so under some abnormal mental condition. Only one thing could have been responsible for that—the hypnotic trance into which you placed her at Mrs. Castleton's party. I happen to know that post-hypnotic suggestion—"

AMKEDDAR had suddenly raised his hand. His cool suavity was gone. "A moment, Mr. Corbin. You speak of matters which might all too easily be misunderstood by servants."

"Servants?" a soft voice inquired, inquired with an ironic inflection. It was the woman who had spoken. Her dark eyes were fixed intently upon Amkeddar. "Can it be, my lord and master, that there are things which you seek to hide from me?"

Amkeddar said harshly, "That will do, Kumara! Return to your room at once." He turned to the guard.

"Chondhas, back to your post?"

"Hold it!" Corbin snapped. "I'll give the orders, if you don't mind. I want these people where I can watch them."

"Do not be melodramatic, Mr. Corbin. I give you my promise that they will not interfere with you in any way."

"Your promise means nothing to me. I'll be certain they're harmless only as long as I can see them."

Abrupt fury twisted Amkeddar's saturnine features into a demoniac mask. He took a step forward, lips writhing back from his teeth, lean dark hands outspread like talons.

Expecting an attack, Corbin settled into a crouch. He watched Amkeddar bleakly, his face craggy with bunched muscles. He held the gun as though no longer aware of it, as though dominated by some primeval battle instinct of fang and claw.

There was an interval of tense, strained silence.

Slowly, Amkeddar relaxed. He began toying with the massive tiger-head ring which he wore on the middle finger of his right hand. His black eyes smouldered malevolently. Desperation, a trapped impotent rage, showed in the set of his face.

Corbin said slowly, "You *are* trying to hide something. And it involves Doris. I'm convinced that you know what happened to her tonight—that you know where she is right now."

Amkeddar shook his turbaned head doggedly. "You jump to conclusions, Mr. Corbin. If I gave the impression of trying to hide something, the explanation is simply that I did not wish Kumara to know that I had . . . ah . . . broken a certain promise. This was never to practice hypnotism outside of my researches. Is that not right, Kumara?"

The woman moved her shoulders.

"In that one respect, yes."

"I merely wished to provide entertainment at Mrs. Castleton's party," Amkeddar went on, his voice quickening with renewed confidence. "When my number was called during the course of the game, the idea of giving an exhibition of hypnotism was the first to come to my mind. I had no time to think of anything else."

"Then why did you make Doris susceptible to hypnotism by placing a drug in the Martini you gave her before the game began?" Corbin demanded flatly.

A FLICKER that might have been dismay crossed Amkeddar's face, but it was hidden almost instantly behind an expression of injured indignation. "That is a lie!" he snapped. "A filthy lie!"

"And why were there the tracks of a tiger below the terrace near Doris' room?" Corbin pursued relentlessly. "Tracks, incidently, which seem to have been made at the same time as Doris'? What sort of a tiger was it merely to have followed her, instead of attacking then and there? Was it a special, trained pet of yours, Dr. Amkeddar—sent to make sure she carried out the post-hypnotic suggestion which you planted in her mind at Mrs. Castleton's party?"

Amkeddar said nothing. His face was impassive, a saturnine visage that might have been carved from some fine-grained, hard dark wood. Beneath lowered lids his eyes held a deadly, intent glitter.

The woman, Kumara, stared unseeingly into the darkness beyond the flood of light which poured through the open doorway. Her full lips had a bitter, sullen droop.

Corbin said softly, "Doris is in your laboratory, isn't she, Dr. Amkeddar?"

The Indian stiffened. "This farce has continued long enough, Mr. Corbin. I demand that you leave at once—or I warn you that I shall prosecute to the fullest extent of the law."

Corbin raised the gun, jerking it in a gesture. "The key to your laboratory, Dr. Amkeddar. Give it to me."

"I refuse. I am in the midst of certain experiments which would be ruined by an intrusion at this point. My work involves the glands of living animals. Startling them or angering them would spoil many weeks of labor."

"The key! Are you going to give it to me—or do I have to put a bullet into each of your legs to force you?"

"You . . . you would hardly dare!"

"Wouldn't I?" Corbin pointed the revolver at Amkeddar's right thigh. His finger began to tighten on the trigger.

There was an abrupt rustle of motion. The guard, Chondhas, had seized the opportunity to leap forward. His arm flashed down in a chopping stroke, the edge of his hand sharply striking the back of Corbin's wrist.

It was a shrewd blow, cleverly placed. Corbin's arm went numb up to the elbow. The revolver dropped from his involuntarily splayed fingers.

Amkeddar pounced upon the weapon with frantic haste. Clutching it warningly in his hand, he straightened, thin lips stretched wide in a grin of malicious triumph. "From now on, I give the orders, Mr. Corbin!"

CHAPTER V

Lady—Or Tiger?

DISMAY was a sick ache inside Corbin. With bitter self-reproach, he realized that he should never have taken his eyes off Chondhas. By having underestimated the man, he had lost

every advantage.

If their positions hadn't so unexpectedly been reversed, he could have forced Amkeddar to show him the laboratory. And if Doris were held captive inside—as he was poignantly certain—Amkeddar could have been charged with kidnaping, his sinister influence permanently removed.

But now—the opportunity was gone. Nor would a new one present itself. Amkeddar had had a narrow escape from detection. And he had been fully appraised as to what Corbin suspected or knew. Thus if he were determined to continue his evil machinations, he was certain to be so painstakingly careful that the difficulties of proving anything against him would be enormous.

Concern for Doris filled Corbin with a cold desolation. What would now become of the girl? Would . . . would he ever see her again? Raging despair surged through him at the thought. His eyes sharpened on Amkeddar as he experienced a wild desire to leap at the man in frenzied defiance of the revolver he held.

The triumph had faded from the Indian's hawkish, dark face. He was glancing from Corbin to Melhorn, black brows drawn in a speculative frown. The gun followed the movements of his eyes like a swaying snake, prepared at any instant to strike.

Kumara moved to Amkeddar's side. She demanded, "What are you going to do?"

"Nothing so obvious as outright murder, of course. You can set your mind to rest on that point." Amkeddar's frown deepened momentarily. Then his thin lips rose at one corner in a hard smile. "There has been much unpleasantness. If our two visitors were to forget what has occurred. . . ."

"You mean to hypnotize—?"

"Watch your tongue!" Amkeddar

snapped.

Kumara's liquid dark eyes showed a flash of repressed anger. She hesitated a moment, then began to speak in a soft, musical foreign language. Amkeddar, speaking in the same dialect, heatedly disagreed with whatever she had outlined. An argument followed. Corbin couldn't understand what was being said. But it seemed clear to him that Amkeddar was insisting upon some course of action to which Kumara was opposed.

CORBIN speculated on the relationship between the pair. Whatever it was, Kumara seemed quite free to voice her own mind. And right now she was doing so with great vigor and courage. She gave every indication of possessing a forcefulness of character equal to Amkeddar's. But her's seemed one of honesty and forthrightness, while Amkeddar's suggested trickery and stealth. On the surface it appeared a highly incompatible combination. Corbin wondered about the underlying facts which provided a common basis.

The unintelligible controversy suddenly ended. Amkeddar fell silent, watching Corbin and Melhorn in a sort of baleful contemplation. Finally he nodded, obviously having reached some decision. His glittering black eyes sharpened purposefully. He said:

"I shall be lenient. You have forcibly invaded my premises and threatened me with bodily harm. Yet I shall overlook this, understanding the fears for Miss Melhorn's safety which motivate you. In coming to me with your fears and suspicions, however, you have embarked on a fool's quest. I know nothing of Miss Melhorn's whereabouts. And now I shall have to ask you to leave. You have entered by force. If necessary, I shall have every right to eject you by force."

Corbin said, "You're forgetting or deliberately overlooking something, Dr. Amkeddar."

"And what is that, if I may ask, Mr. Corbin?"

"The police. If you're so completely guiltless, you can have us arrested, you know."

"I see no reason to bring the police into this. No harm has been done. The . . . ah . . . the score, as I see it, is even."

"So, if you're hiding something," Corbin said, "you wouldn't want to take the chance that an investigation by the police would lose you the game."

Amkeddar's black eyes flashed wrathfully. "You're a fool, Mr. Corbin! Your mind is a hodge-podge or legal technicalities and childish fancies. Enough, I say!" He jerked the revolver in a peremptory gesture at the roadster. "Get in."

CORBIN hesitated, lips tightening. But the revolver was unwaveringly pointed. A leap could only mean certain death. The tense set of his shoulders left him. With a dejected glance at Melhorn, he walked to the car and slowly climbed in. When Melhorn had followed, Amkeddar and Chondhas mounted the running board on either side, and Corbin sent the roadster moving down the driveway toward the gate.

At the end of the driveway, Amkeddar swung off, standing guard while Chondhas opened the gate. He bowed mockingly, gesturing toward the road. "This way out. Good night!"

With a growl of fury, Corbin sent the roadster careening down the road in a defiant burst of speed. He drove with reckless violence, lips compressed whitely, eyes blazing with rage. Melhorn slumped in his seat, apathetically unresponsive.

Reaching the main highway, Corbin

slowed to a stop. He fumbled through his jacket for his cigarettes, tapped one out, then belatedly remembering his manners, passed the pack to Melhorn. They lighted up, smoked in brooding silence. Finally Corbin muttered:

"If only I hadn't been so careless. . . ."

"You did your best, Jeff," Melhorn comforted dully.

"But Doris—"

"We could go to the police. It might not be too late."

"They wouldn't find anything. Amkeddar would be expecting a move like that."

"Then what else—"

Corbin tossed his cigarette away, straightening sharply. "Just thought of something. We're going back. As far as the gate anyway."

Melhorn stared. "What . . . what do you intend to do?"

"See if an idea of mine is any good. It may not pan out, but it won't do any harm to take a chance." He switched off the car lights, waiting a moment until his eyes became adjusted to the illumination of the setting moon. It was almost dawn. No cars had passed on the highway, and there were certain to be none on Cedar Road. Driving without lights would be almost completely without danger. The road would show up clearly enough in such moonlight as was left.

He turned the roadster around, sent gliding almost silently in the direction from which they had come. His pulses quickened. If he were right, the odds would shift in his favor. Amkeddar would logically expect him to turn to the police. Thus if Doris were held prisoner in the laboratory, Amkeddar would have to hide her somewhere safely beyond the walls of his estate.

He was going to watch the gate. If a car came through, it wouldn't be to

difficult to follow. . . .

THE roadster crept stealthily along the dim concrete ribbon. Presently the familiar wall rose grayly in the gloom ahead. Corbin spotted a dense thicket bordering the road and sent the roadster lurching and bumping through a convenient though narrow opening. He left the car, moving to a spot several feet away from where he could see anyone leaving the gate.

Melhorn joined him. They squatted together in the sheltering foliage, waiting.

Minutes like eternities dragged by. The moon was dropping toward the horizon. With its going would come the intense darkness that precedes dawn. Corbin began watching the moon, worrying his lip. If it got too dark, following another car without lights would be dangerous.

Within seconds, his silent pleas were answered. A metallic clicking sounded, followed by a protesting squeal. The gate was being opened!

Just enough light was left. Just enough—Corbin craned forward with a fierce eagerness, narrowed eyes filtering the gloom.

There was no hum of a motor, no whirring of wheels on gravel. Instead—Corbin stifled a gasp of astonishment.

A tiger padded lithely through the gate. It paused in the middle of the road, swiveling its sleek head about as if in uncertainty. It whined softly, a queerly anxious sound. Then it turned toward the undergrowth on the side of the road opposite Corbin's, glided through it, and was gone.

The gate hinges squealed again. There was the clicking of the lock being secured. Then—silence.

Corbin glanced at Melhorn, frowning. Melhorn whispered:

"A tiger, Jeff! What on earth is

Amkeddar doing—letting pussy out for the night? Or is there something important behind it?"

"It wasn't what I expected, at any rate," Corbin muttered.

"What did you hope to see?"

Corbin explained tersely.

"Perhaps they left before we got back," Melhorn said. "They might have gone in the opposite direction on Cedar Road."

Corbin shook his head. "I don't think so. Amkeddar would have had to be mighty fast. There wasn't much time between our departure and return. No—I'm certain they haven't left yet." Corbin stood up, glancing around. "We'll wait a while longer—and we'd better do it in the car. It isn't safe out here with a tiger roaming about. If anyone leaves, we'll hear it."

In the car, Corbin leaned on the steering wheel, listening. His fingers idly stroked the horn release. A mere outlet for his nerves, yet it gave him an idea. If the tiger were to find them, he thought, a blast from the horn would scare it away. But then—no, it wasn't such a good idea after all. Amkeddar would be warned of their presence.

He scowled in mounting anxiety. Doris—Why didn't Amkeddar show up? If only the tiger wouldn't come nosing around. . . .

THE tiger—and the tiger tracks below the terrace, near the windows of Doris' room. Was it the same tiger, he wondered? Why had it so mysteriously been let out? Had it been . . . sent somewhere?

A few things seemed certain, however. The gatemán at the Castleton estate had known what he was talking about. Tigers *did* roam Sylvan Heights at night. And Amkeddar was definitely responsible for it. But—what was the man up to? What was the reason

behind the whole incredible business?

The moon was gone. The intense pre-dawn darkness closed in around the car. On the horizon to the east, the sky began to gray.

Melhorn stretched stiffly. "Doesn't look like Amkeddar's going anywhere, Jeff."

"We could have returned with the police long ago," Corbin agreed. His voice was leaden with disappointment. "If Amkeddar took any precautions against that, they weren't what I thought they'd be."

Melhorn said slowly, "Perhaps Amkeddar didn't have Doris in his laboratory after all, Jeff. Perhaps it was something else he was trying to hide."

"But he knows what happened to Doris. Everything points to him."

"It seems so. Anyway, Jeff, there's nothing to be gained by waiting any longer. Amkeddar has had more than enough time to prepare his defenses."

Corbin sighed and nodded. "We'll return to the house, then. A search of the grounds by daylight may turn up something to give us a fresh start." He switched on the lights of the car, sent it bumping and swaying back onto the road.

Dawn was breaking when Corbin pulled to a stop before the Melhorn residence. He climbed stiffly from the car, and in dismal silence followed Melhorn up the steps to the door. As Melhorn fumbled abstractedly for his keys, the door suddenly opened. The smooth, round face of the butler grinned out at them. He said:

"I was waiting for you to return, sir. I have good news."

Melhorn stared in surprise. "Good news?"

"Yes, sir, Miss Doris has returned safely."

Corbin jerked into startled rigidity. Melhorn gasped:

"Doris—returned! When? How long ago?"

"About an hour, sir. Miss Nora and Dr. Lorrimer are with her now."

Corbin's thoughts raced furiously. Had he been wrong? Was it possible that Doris had been nowhere near Amkeddar's estate? He and Melhorn had been watching Amkeddar's gate for more than an hour. Nothing except a tiger had gone through.

Only a tiger. An animal. Nothing human. But Doris *had* been locked in Amkeddar's laboratory. Of this he was piercingly, unshakably certain. For Doris to have returned could only mean—

HIS mind flamed abruptly with a volcanic realization. Something hinted at by Mrs. Castleton's gateman returned to him with stunning force. Something about people who might be tigers. . . . Which might be taken to mean people who could change—or be changed—into tigers.

Nonsense! Sheer insanity! And yet—

A tiger had gone through Amkeddar's gate. And Doris had returned.

CHAPTER VI

A Change of Heart

A SMALL shaded lamp on a dressing table lighted Doris' room dimly. Nora Melhorn stood near the French windows, talking in whispers to a short stocky man whom Corbin decided was Dr. Lorrimer. He ignored the pair for the moment as he left Melhorn's side and crossed swiftly over to the bed.

Doris was asleep. Her features seemed a trifle drawn and pale, but otherwise her appearance was reassuring enough. She looked somehow like

a tired little girl, huddled under the covers, her coppery-brown hair tumbled in disarray over the pillow.

Relief swept Corbin. Looking at the girl, knowing she was safe, made the grim events of the past few hours seem suddenly trivial.

Then he noticed that her hands had been lightly bandaged. Nothing serious, apparently. Scratches, at the most. But bandages—

A memory leaped into his mind like a picture thrown on a screen. The memory of a tiger padding lithely across the road and disappearing into the undergrowth which bordered it. Something heavy and cold turned over inside him. Rocks and sharp twigs would have been strewn thickly in the tiger's path through the fields. And Doris wore bandages. . . .

He became aware of Melhorn standing beside him. Their glances met. Relief showed on the older man's face, but his eyes were dark with the shadow of a dreadful suspicion. Quite evidently, he too had noticed the bandages. If he had not already arrived at the same conclusion as Corbin, he seemed well on the way to doing so.

Nora Melhorn glided up, motioning for quiet. Melhorn whispered:

"How did Doris get back?"

"I don't know, Barton. I looked in several times, and then I found her lying there. She was a sight! Hands and feet all wet and covered with mud. I tried to question her, but she seemed unable to remember anything." Nora gestured toward the door. "Now you'd better leave. I'll watch Doris."

Melhorn nodded and beckoned to Corbin and Lorrimer. He led them to the library, where he introduced Lorrimer to Corbin and set about making drinks. When they had been settled in chairs, Melhorn asked Lorrimer:

"Well, George, how is she?"

"Nothing seriously wrong, as far as I could discover," Lorrimer responded. He was pleasant-featured in a blunt, heavy way. His main distinction seemed to be a hirsute one, for his hair, mustache, and eyebrows were all thick, bristling, and almost startlingly black.

"But the bandages—?" Melhorn pursued.

"Just minor scratches. On the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet." Lorrimer studied his glass a moment. The action, to Corbin, seemed oddly evasive. Lorrimer obviously knew something that he didn't intend to reveal just then—if at all. Finally Lorrimer looked up, meeting Melhorn's gaze. "What's it all about anyway, Barton? Nora wasn't very coherent, I'm afraid."

MELHORN glanced hesitantly at Corbin. Corbin said:

"With your permission—?" At Melhorn's nod, he launched into a swift, concise account of the events surrounding Doris' temporary disappearance. He began with the circumstances of the disappearance itself, mentioning his and Melhorn's suspicions of Amkeddar, based on the hypnotizing of Doris by the Indian at Mrs. Castleton's party and the drug which previously he had dropped into Doris' Martini. Then Corbin detailed the expedition to Amkeddar's estate and its outcome. He said nothing of the incredible conclusion to which he had come, linking Doris' return to the tiger which he and Melhorn had seen leaving Amkeddar's gate. He felt impelled to trust Lorrimer, but thought it wisest to state only facts. The implications were there—if Lorrimer were shrewd enough to detect them. To have stated them baldly would only have emphasized their utter bizarreness, to the extent of casting serious doubts on Corbin's sanity.

Lorrimer toyed musingly for a moment with his empty glass. Finally he glanced at Corbin from under the cliff-like overhang of his thick black brows and said slowly, "Your story contains hints of something . . . well, disturbing. I don't intend to discuss it. You carefully avoided doing so yourself, I noticed. It's that sort of a subject, apparently. But I do want to comment on one detail of what you have told me—the numerous references to tigers."

Corbin said eagerly, "You know something?"

"Not exactly. Only to the extent that I've heard rumors about night-roaming tigers myself. A doctor's work takes him among all classes of people, you know. And people like to talk. The strange thing is, however, that the only ones who to my knowledge have mentioned seeing or hearing about tigers are those of the serving class—domestic help, farmers, and such." Lorrimer nodded at Corbin. "Mrs. Castleton's gateman, yes. Obviously, the majority of the wealthy residents of Sylvan Heights have not seen or heard about the tigers, or if they have are strangely inclined not to discuss them."

Lorrimer set his glass on a nearby table and leaned forward in increased earnestness. "Now why should this be? It is evident that the rumors are too striking, too prevalent, to escape notice. Is it that these wealthy residents know something about the tigers which they are trying to hide? If so, what is it? I wouldn't care to hazard a guess, but one thing seems certain—Dr. Subhas Amkeddar is involved."

"At least two things point to him. The first is that he is somehow connected with the tiger rumor. This is borne out by your own discovery—the tiger you saw leaving his estate—"

"Also by a ring with a tiger-head insignia which Amkeddar wears on the middle finger of his right hand," Corbin put in.

Melhorn said, "If I may be permitted to add still another reason. . . . It's that Amkeddar seems to play host to a large group of visitors at odd hours of the night. Usually quite late—and on certain days. These visitors are . . . well, of the wealthy class. Mostly women. The sort who are always searching for thrills."

LORRIMER nodded his bushy black head. "The fourth thing, then. Lately I've had occasion to examine a number of wealthy class patients . . . routine check-ups, minor illnesses, and the sort. On the left arms of more than a few I found small red marks in various stages of healing. Marks which could only have been left by the insertion into a vein of a hypodermic needle. Drugs?" Lorrimer jerked one shoulder in a gesture of bafflement. "I could find none of the symptoms of ordinary narcotics. Anyway, Doris has such a mark on her left arm."

Corbin shot forward in his chair. "Doris! You're certain?"

"Quite. And it was made very recently—hardly more than three or four hours ago. From what you've told me of Dr. Subhas Amkeddar dropping something into Doris' drink, and the rest, it seems that he's the most likely candidate among persons who might be responsible. And that, of course, would mean that he was responsible also for the marks on the arms of the other persons I mentioned."

Melhorn rose angrily to his feet. "Then what in the name of reason are we waiting for? We have enough on the man right now to put him safely beyond creating further harm."

Lorrimer shook his head slowly, al-

most sadly. "We know this much—but what could we charge him with? Illegal use of drugs? What sort of drugs? They left no symptoms that I could recognize and it's certain that no other medical man could either. Unless we can be definite about this, we might as well not waste our time. The police don't act on mere suspicion, you know.

"Kidnaping?" Lorrimer went on. "But Doris has returned. And as far as I could make out, she hasn't been harmed. Are there any facts which could be used in court to show that Dr. Subhas Amkeddar actually was behind her temporary disappearance?

"Threatening public safety by being responsible for the roaming tigers? But has anyone been hurt? Despite the fact that many persons have glimpsed tigers, the police would laugh at the story unless concrete proof of the tigers and their danger could be produced."

Lorrimer shook his head again. "And there's another and quite important point to consider. Dr. Subhas Amkeddar seems intimately connected with a sizeable group of influential people. Probably they are backing him in whatever he is up to. I don't know. But if they were to put pressure on the authorities, no charge we pinned on him would stick unless it were conclusive beyond any slightest doubt."

"I agree with that," Corbin said grimly. "But it can't be entirely hopeless. There must be something we can go on. Amkeddar's work, for example. He's supposed to be doing research on animal glands—and the state recently passed an anti-vivisection law. If we knew for certain—"

LORRIMER'S stocky form had grown rigid with sudden excitement. "I think you've hit on something! As I said a while ago, a doctor gets around, hears things. Well, nu-

merous persons have told me that Dr. Subhas Amkeddar has been buying a large quantity of livestock—cattle, sheep, and goats. And on at least two occasions, persons driving past his place late at night have heard the screams of animals—and . . . growls."

"Tiger growls?" Corbin asked quickly.

"They weren't specific. Just growls. But since Dr. Subhas Amkeddar seems more or less definitely linked to tigers, I'd say that was possible." Lorrimer's heavy black brows drew together in a frown. "I don't see that this helps much, however. If Amkeddar is in some way breaking the anti-vivisection law, nothing much could be done to him. A fine, at the most."

"But," Corbin pointed out, "if all we wanted was an excuse to get the police to search his estate, that would be plenty. The police might ignore the tiger or drug angles because they can't be backed up by proof. But this is something definite. It's generally known that Amkeddar is doing some kind of research work on animal glands. Records could be shown that Amkeddar has been buying animals—quite obviously for his experiments. And witnesses could be produced to testify to hearing animal screams, issuing from his estate. The police couldn't ignore these facts. They'd have to agree on a search."

Lorrimer's frown deepened. "I can't see what good a mere search would accomplish."

"Amkeddar's research work may be just a blind," Corbin explained incisively. "Actually he may be up to something entirely different—something . . . well, devilish. And if the police were unexpectedly to walk in on him, looking for one thing, but only to find another—"

"That's it!" Melhorn exclaimed,

bringing his palm down with a sharp sound on the arm of his chair. "While we were at his place, Jeff, I had the distinct impression that he was hiding something in that laboratory of his. Not Doris—if she had actually been inside—but something else."

Lorrimer glanced curiously at Corbin. "You seem to have something. What do you intend to do with it?"

"That depends on Amkeddar. I'm not one to interfere with matters that are no business of mine, but if he doesn't leave Doris alone, I'll do everything in my power to put him behind bars."

"We'll see, then. And if you need my help, don't hesitate to call on me." Lorrimer rose, stifling a yawn. "Better be running along. I could do with a little more sleep." He shook hands with Corbin, picked up his black bag, and with Melhorn strode to the door.

ALONE, Corbin abruptly became aware of his own weariness. The library windows were bright with dawn, but a few hours of sleep would be welcome. When Melhorn came back into the room and suggested that they snatch a short rest, Corbin readily agreed.

It was well past noon when Corbin awoke. He had been looking forward to this day in particular. It was to have meant an entire day with Doris, and he was dismayed that so much of it had gone. He dressed hurriedly and descended to the lower floor.

At the foot of the stairs he met Nora Melhorn, who seemed to be on her way back to Doris' room. He asked eagerly:

"Is Doris awake?"

"No, Jeffery." Her angular, patrician features were sallow from her long, sleepless virgil. "And I think it would be best not to wake her. Doris needs as much rest as she can get."

"Of course," Corbin said. Nora Melhorn continued on her way, and he sighed dismally. Then, with a fatalistic shrug of his shoulders, he went in search of the dining room.

The butler had breakfast waiting—or "brunch", to be more precise, Corbin thought. He helped himself, discovering that he was almost ravenously hungry. When he had finished, he lighted a cigarette and wandered out to the garden. Seated on a stone bench beneath an apple tree, he found Melhorn. The older man had a chess set laid out on the bench and seemed to be engaged in working out a problem. Corbin decided, as he approached, that Melhorn wasn't trying very hard.

They exchanged greetings and began a desultory conversation. Finally Melhorn suggested a game of chess, and Corbin agreed. He lost consistently, without being very much aware of the fact. His eyes kept wandering to the windows of Doris' room, partially visible from where he sat on the bench opposite Melhorn.

It wasn't until late afternoon that he learned Doris had at last awakened. Nora Melhorn consented to allowing him to spend a short time with the girl, cautioning him not to excite or alarm her.

DORIS was seated in bed. She looked refreshed and lovely, her features showing no traces of her experience early that morning. When Corbin had settled himself into a chair beside the bed, she laughed ruefully.

"I'm an awful pig, Jeff, sleeping so late. It must have been that Martini I drank last night."

Corbin's grin was teasing. "Oh, yeah? How do I know that was the only one you had?"

"But it was, Jeff. I really don't care for drinks—they make me sleepy."

"Well, what about that hypnotizing stunt our friend Dr. Amkeddar pulled you into? That might account for it." Corbin sat back in his chair, clasping his hands behind his head. He tried to look casual.

"Oh . . . that was nothing."

The grin faded from Corbin's lips. "You didn't seem to think so last night."

"Last night . . . ?" Doris frowned a little and passed the back of one bandaged hands across her forehead. "It's funny, Jeff. . . . I don't seem to remember what happened last night very well."

Corbin said through stiff lips, "You remember being hypnotized by Dr. Amkeddar?"

"Why, yes."

"And returning home?"

"Yes."

"Nothing after that?"

"No . . . nothing until I awoke a while ago." A faint alarm showed on Doris' face. "Jeff—is there anything wrong?"

"Of course not," Corbin said quickly. "I was just trying to help you decide why you slept so long." He hesitated a moment, then added, "You don't think that hypnotizing stunt of Dr. Amkeddar's might be responsible?"

"It couldn't be, Jeff. Amkeddar is all right."

Corbin gasped in consternation, "All right!"

Doris nodded with an eagerness almost child-like. "Certainly, Jeff. He wouldn't do anything wrong. I . . . I like him."

Corbin could only stare. A cold, terrible wind seemed to catch him and whirl him dizzily away and away.

Last night Doris had been afraid of Amkeddar. Now—she trusted him, liked him.

Corbin could see Amkeddar's plan

now. The whole evil scheme was becoming clear. What, he wondered anxiously, would be the wily Indian's next move? After a moment he decided he knew, and dread was a constricting sensation in his chest.

Doris becoming more and more friendly with Amkeddar. Driving with him, dancing with him—visiting with him.

CHAPTER VII

Top Man

CORBIN leaned toward the bed, his pretense of casualness abandoned. He said earnestly:

"You didn't feel the same about Dr. Amkeddar last night. You told me you were afraid of him."

Doris' tawny eyes grew bewildered. She passed her hand across her forehead again, groping for memories that eluded her. Then she seemed to undergo a change. It was as though, in her search, she had found something that she hadn't known was there—something completely natural and logical, the obvious solution to her perplexity. She moved her slender shoulders in a shrug. She said:

"A gal can change her mind, can't she?"

"There's no law against it, as far as I know," Corbin said. "But, Doris, have you stopped to consider whether you changed your mind of your own free will—or whether it was changed for you?"

". . . I don't know what you're talking about." Her tone was cold, faintly hostile.

Corbin decided that he had to be more careful. He was treading dangerous ground—going counter to the new thoughts and emotions which Doris had been given. Wherever he touched upon

her old attitude toward Amkeddar, her barriers would be up. He had to be careful—yet he wanted to see just how extensive those barriers were. He spoke softly, slowly.

"Doris, you remember being hypnotized by Dr. Amkeddar last night?"

"Of course."

"Well, hasn't it occurred to you that this might be responsible for your change of mind about him?"

"Don't be silly, Jeff. It was just an exhibition. There was really nothing more to it."

"But isn't it strange that you should experience such a complete and sudden change?"

"That's my own affair, Jeff."

Dismay flooded Corbin. Then came an overpowering anger that Amkeddar's stratagem should have been so successful. He threw further insinuations aside. For the moment he knew only that he had to fight this dangerous new attitude of Doris—had to fight it and conquer it.

He reached toward the bed and took one of the girl's hands. He fought to keep his voice steady.

"Doris, you've got to snap out of it. You aren't acting naturally, can't you understand that? You've been hypnotized—made to behave directly opposite to your true feelings. It's all part of a rotten scheme, and Dr. Amkeddar is behind it."

She drew her hand away. "Please, Jeff, don't be foolish. Dr. Amkeddar is . . . wonderful. He wouldn't do anything underhanded."

CORBIN persisted desperately, "The fact that you're talking like that shows he has. Look, Doris. Last night you disliked Amkeddar. You were actually afraid of him. And he knew it. He was interested in you, and didn't intend to leave matters as they were. I've

no reason to be certain, but I think he suggested that parlor game to Mrs. Castleton, knowing that if he were able to hypnotize you, he could change your feelings toward him. And, Doris, that's just what he has done! The man's evil, I tell you—rotten clear through. If you don't snap out of it, he'll hurt you in some nasty twisted way."

Doris' tawny eyes flashed indignantly. "Jeffrey Corbin, I'll have you understand that I won't let you speak of Dr. Amkeddar like that. He . . . why, he's fine! You're just jealous."

Corbin sighed. He felt helpless, tired.

A discreet tapping sounded at the door. Doris called out an invitation to enter, and Melhorn strode into the room.

"Hope I'm not intruding."

"Of course not, Dad," Doris said pointedly. "I'm glad you came." She patted the bed. "Come on and sit down."

Melhorn settled himself gingerly. "Well, honey, how do you feel after that . . . uhm . . . long sleep you had?"

"Swell."

"No bad dreams?"

"No. . . ." She studied Melhorn's face, frowning. "Say, Dad, why does everyone ask so many questions? I'm not a sick child."

"Do they?" Melhorn threw a guarded glance at Corbin.

"Yes, definitely. First Aunt Nora, then Jeff, and now you."

"Well. . . ." Clearly at a loss, Melhorn shrugged.

Corbin said, "Doris and I were discussing Dr. Amkeddar before you came in. She seems to think very highly of him."

Melhorn's grizzled brows rose sharply. ". . . Very highly!"

"So it seems. I was trying to con-

vince her that she didn't feel the same about him last night—before he hypnotized her. She refuses to believe me, or that the hypnosis could be responsible."

"It's just a lot of nonsense," Doris stated emphatically.

Melhorn rose slowly to his feet. "See here, Doris, suppose I told you that it wasn't a lot of nonsense—that Jeff was perfectly right?"

"I still won't believe it."

"But good heavens, girl, doesn't my word mean anything? Jeff's right. I know he's right!"

Doris turned her face away. "Please, Dad. Why lie to me? I know my own feelings."

Melhorn made a choking sound. His face looked wild. He leaned over the bed and grasped her shoulders with earnest intensity.

"Doris—have I ever lied to you? About anything?"

"... No."

"Then why should I be lying now?"

"I don't know. Oh—I don't know!" Her voice rose with a shrill note of hysteria. "Please leave me alone. Why does everyone keep asking me questions—hounding me? I can't help the way I feel. I like Dr. Amkeddar. I've always liked him. Nothing you can say will change that." She twisted from Melhorn's grasp and buried her face in the pillow. Her body shook with sobs.

Melhorn straightened slowly. He seemed burned out, defeated—suddenly old.

THE door abruptly burst open, and Nora Melhorn rushed into the room. With a swift, appraising glance at the distraught girl in the bed, she turned indignantly on Melhorn and Corbin.

"Didn't I tell you not to excite her? She's in no condition to be asked a lot of questions. Now go on out of here,

both of you! She'll be a nervous wreck if she isn't left in peace."

Melhorn looked in weary resignation at Corbin, turned, and led the way from the room. In the library he poured drinks. His hands shook a little, Corbin noticed. The observation was made with sympathy and understanding. Corbin felt anything but steady himself.

The drinks turned out to be stiff ones, and straight. Which suited Corbin perfectly. He needed something to fill the cold hollow inside him.

"What on earth do you make of it, Jeff?" Melhorn asked after a moment. "Doris seems to have developed what might almost be called a crush on our friend Amkeddar."

"Exactly," Corbin said. "But developed hardly describes it. We might say it was cut to size and nailed on."

"Hypnotism, eh?"

"I'm not so sure. It may go deeper than that. Remember the hypodermic mark on her arm that Lorrimer told us about."

Melhorn nodded slowly. "And those other people he mentioned, with identical marks—do you suppose the same thing happened to them?"

"I don't know. It doesn't seem likely that Amkeddar would go in for that sort of thing on a grand scale. I'd say that most of the people he has a hold on were ready, willing, and able."

"Most?"

"Well, a few may have had to be . . . persuaded."

"But how does that account for the fact that all have hypodermic marks?"

Corbin spread his hands. "Identical hypodermic marks don't necessarily mean identical drugs, with identical effects," he pointed out.

"That's right, of course," Melhorn agreed.

Corbin went on, "As a theory, we

might say that some degree of hypnosis accompanied all injections, but the different drugs used produced different results. As to what those results are, I . . . I don't know." Corbin stared at his glass, wondering if Melhorn had detected the evasion. He was more than fairly certain that he did know.

There was a momentary silence. Melhorn nibbled thoughtfully at his lip. Finally he said:

"Uhm . . . Jeff, those results you spoke of—you don't suppose that tigers are somehow involved?"

Corbin pretended surprise. "Tigers? What do you mean?"

MELHORN looked hesitant. "Well, tigers seem to be a thread running through this whole fantastic business. There are the tiger tracks we found in the garden. If, as you say, Jeff, they were made at the same time as Doris', the fact that it didn't attack her shows that it was definitely an unusual animal. And if its purpose actually had been to lead her somewhere, it would seem to have qualities almost . . . well, human.

"Then there is the tiger we saw leaving Amkeddar's estate. The hypodermic mark in Doris' arm, her strange and sudden affection for Amkeddar, all show that he is involved. Therefore, she must have been somewhere on his premises—most likely in that laboratory of his—at the same time as ourselves. And she returned home shortly before we did. But, Jeff, the only living thing that left Amkeddar's place was that tiger we saw.

"And finally there is the insinuation you mentioned, made by Mrs. Castleton's gateman. The possibility that some people might be tigers." Melhorn studied his hands as though abruptly self-conscious. "Dash it, Jeff! Can't you see what it all adds up to?"

Corbin nodded slowly. "I've known for quite a while. I hesitated to come right out with it, though, because I saw how upset you were over Doris, and I was afraid that this inference would be a knockout blow. I had a hard enough time hanging on to my own sanity."

Melhorn's face twisted. He flung out his hands in a gesture of bewilderment and demanded, "What on earth could that devil be up to? What is the reason behind everything?"

"Where the tigers are concerned, I don't know," Corbin said. "But as regards Doris, the whole affair seems clear enough. Amkeddar was interested in her, but he saw that she disliked and feared him. The most effective way of getting around these feelings was for him to use his talent for hypnosis. Most likely he suggested that parlor game to Mrs. Castleton, knowing it would sooner or later give him his chance. It did. He planted in Doris' mind the post-hypnotic suggestion that she was later to come to his estate. There he put the finishing touches to his rotten scheme. Doris is now convinced that she has always liked and trusted him, and she seems to have been coached so thoroughly that she just won't listen to what anyone has to say to the contrary.

"And now, of course, Amkeddar can see her as often as he wants to, and he doesn't have to be secretive about it. If anyone objects, what good will it do? Doris is convinced that she likes him. She's of legal age, quite free to choose her own friends. He can take her out—and nobody will be the wiser. It's common knowledge that women find him romantic and fascinating. Why should Doris be any different? The fact that she isn't won't be considered unusual at all."

Melhorn's features were set in stern lines. He said grimly, "I certainly

won't permit Doris to see that scoundrell!"

"But what can you do to stop her?" Corbin asked gently. "Would you take the stand of most parents—order her from the house? That would be playing directly into Amkeddar's hands. And of course there's the fact that Doris isn't responsible for her condition."

MELHORN slumped in defeated silence. He worried at his lip, eyes dark with inner turmoil.

Corbin said, "This isn't easy for me either. The way I feel about Doris should be obvious enough. It's taking everything I've got to keep from blowing my top. But we'll have to have clear heads if we're to spoil Amkeddar's little game."

Melhorn gestured despairingly. "Yes—but how?"

"Amkeddar himself may show us a way. He has the ball right now, but sooner or later he'll fumble it. In the meantime, Doris has to be kept out of his reach. Lorrimer can help us in doing that. He can give Doris sedatives or something of the sort to keep her in bed."

Melhorn nodded eagerly. "That's an idea, Jeff! We'll try it."

Evening came. After a somewhat silent dinner with Melhorn, Corbin announced his intention of returning to the city.

"This has been a sorry week-end for you, Jeff," Melhorn said. "But the invitation still stands. In fact, it's now obligatory; and a special favor to me, considering what has happened. I'll be looking for you next week."

"I'll be here," Corbin responded. "Be sure to let me know if anything comes up in the meantime." He shook hands with Melhorn, then went to bid farewell to Doris. She offered her hand to him coolly.

"Good-night, Jeff."

"I'll be back next week, Doris."

"Will you?" She didn't seem interested.

Corbin left, an ache nagging in his chest. Determination to fight Amkeddar surged through him with renewed force. But he wondered if, despite his efforts, the Doris of old would ever be restored to him.

CHAPTER VIII

Watch By Night

THE severe, scholarly-looking woman who served as Corbin's secretary entered the office with an air of mild excitement. She said:

"Mr. Barton Melhorn wishes to see you. He says it is important."

Corbin laid aside his pen, thoughts flaring anxiously. Melhorn's visit could only concern Doris, he knew. Only a few days had passed since his tumultuous week-end visit to Sylvan Heights. Could something have happened so soon?

Corbin rose from the desk. "Send Mr. Melhorn in at once."

Melhorn's face was drawn, his eyes shadowed with worry. He shook Corbin's hand briefly and dropped into a chair. He spoke without preamble.

"Amkeddar seems to have taken another move in the game, Jeff."

"How do you mean?" Corbin asked tensely. "What has he done?"

"I don't know what he's done, Jeff. But Doris . . . strayed again last night. I knew nothing about it until Nora told me this morning. She'd brought Doris breakfast as usual and found Doris' hands and feet scratched and muddy like . . . like the first time."

Corbin fought down a surge of angry dismay. "But Lorrimer? Didn't he give her something to keep her in bed?"

Melhorn nodded. "He did. It seems, however, that Amkeddar's control over Doris is stronger. The mind frequently can claim strange victories over the body, you know. And besides, there's hypnotism and Lord knows what else mixed up in it."

"That washes up my little scheme for keeping Doris away from Amkeddar," Corbin mused bleakly. "Sedatives aren't strong enough. We could try narcotics—dope, to be exact. But that would be too much like fighting fire with atomic bombs."

Melhorn sighed tiredly. "Then we're licked, isn't that it? For Amkeddar to have acted so soon can only mean he suspected there was little or nothing we could do against him. Now he knows. Obviously, he sent for Doris to question her."

"And now he can go ahead with the rest of his rotten plan." Corbin's voice was leaden.

"There's one possibility left," Melhorn said after a momentary silence. "We could go to the police."

"That wouldn't do any good. Amkeddar would simply deny anything we tried to pin on him—and Doris would back him up."

"But we can't just sit back and do nothing at all, Jeff! Amkeddar now knows he has a clear path for whatever deviltry he has in mind. He must be stopped before it's too late."

CORBIN fell to pacing the floor, reddish brows pinched together in an agony of thought. Finally, eyes glittering, he whirled to a stop before Melhorn. "If I'm not wrong about one angle of this business, we still have a hand to play! As I said before, it's Amkeddar's move. Well, he's made that move. He's shown us a way to get at him."

"But I don't see how. . . ." Melhorn

looked puzzled.

"He's shown us a way—by sending for Doris. Don't you see? There's a good chance that he may send for her again—and soon. If and when he does, I'm going to follow her. Most likely she'll go directly to his estate, as seems the usual procedure. I'll slip inside somehow. Amkeddar will hardly expect anything like that, and with luck I can take him by surprise. If I can"—Corbin's lips thinned in a hard smile—"our troubles are over. I'll persuade him at gun point to release Doris from his control. He'll never get another chance at her after that. We'll be on guard against him, and once more in possession of her own will, Doris will co-operate with us."

"You'll be taking a terrible risk, Jeff," Melhorn pointed out. "If you should be caught—"

"Devil the risk!" Corbin grunted. "It's Doris I'm worried about."

Melhorn shook his head slowly. "Amkeddar's an utter rogue, Jeff. If you fall into his hands a second time, you won't get off as lightly as before. We must be prepared for that emergency. I'll agree to your plan only if you let me go along. I could wait outside, in the car, and if there is any indication that something has happened to you, I could get the police before Amkeddar had time to do anything . . . drastic."

Corbin grinned slightly and shrugged. "Have it your own way, then. I'll settle my affairs here, and will drive out to Sylvan Heights this evening. Then, each night, we'll watch the windows of Doris' room. When she leaves, we'll follow. But remember—not a word of this to Doris. Amkeddar may question her and be warned."

"As you say, Jeff." Melhorn rose and gripped Corbin's hand. "I'll arrange to have you slipped secretly into the house when you arrive. In the meantime, I'd

better be getting back."

The expression confidence faded from Corbin's face as Melhorn left. Realization struck into him of how completely foolhardy was his plan. What he intended to do was equivalent to bearding the lion—or more appropriately, the tiger—in its den. Yet it was the only course against Amkeddar open to him. There could be no misgivings or regrets.

PALE silver radiance from a moon near full etched the house and grounds in somber shades of black and gray. A thin wind moved like a fretful ghost among the leaves of trees and shrubs. To Corbin, crouching with Melhorn behind a screen of rhododendron bushes, the rustling of the foliage seemed whispers of menace. Long minutes of peering through the darkness made the moon-cast shadows appear to flow and undulate, as though possessed of inimical alien life.

With a twinge of self-disgust, Corbin altered the direction of his thoughts. He was beginning to image things. He and Melhorn had been watching for several hours now, and this was the third night of their vigil. The strain, Corbin decided, was beginning to tell.

He shifted impatiently, dimly aware that Melhorn stirred also. He whispered, "Wish something would happen. This waiting is getting on my nerves."

"Maybe we were wrong, Jeff," Melhorn whispered in return. "Maybe Amkeddar doesn't intend to send for Doris after all. Not for a long time, anyway."

"Or maybe Doris found out I was here, and realized what we were up to."

"I hardly think so. We were too careful about that end."

"Hope you're right." Corbin settled to a more comfortable position on the

damp turf and returned his attention to the house. It stood some thirty feet away, bulking grayly in the moon-lit dusk. The French windows of Doris' room, slightly opened, were clearly visible over the top of the terrace balustrade. With the moonlight flooding the terrace and gleaming on the window panes, no movement could possibly be missed.

Corbin had chosen his and Melhorn's vantage point carefully. It was located amid the dense shrubbery at the base of the two-story garage, where by night shadows were thickest. From here the entire garden and rear of the house could most easily be seen, the garage wall itself forming a protection against any possibility of attack from behind. And from the garage, the driveway led down to the road in front of the house. Corbin's roadster stood on the driveway, ready for immediate use.

THE long minutes dragged slowly past. Despite himself, Corbin had almost dozed off when abruptly he felt the grip of Melhorn's finger's upon his arm. Full awareness flowed back to him with a rush. Glancing instinctively at the windows of Doris' room, he saw instantly what had alerted Melhorn. The windows were moving—opening!

Corbin held his breath tautly. The event for which he had so long and impatiently been waiting was actually taking place at last. Or—was it merely some chance vagary of the wind that was swinging the windows wide? He watched in mounting tenseness as the opening in the window grew.

Then, through the opening, the head and shoulders of a girl—all that was visible over the top of the terrace balustrade—moved into sight. It was Doris, pale and wraith-like in the silver radiance of the moon. She was staring

straight before her as though intent upon something in the far distance. A long moment she stood there, and then she suddenly bent, moving out of sight behind the balustrade. She might have reached down to pick up something at her feet. But she did not straighten up into view again.

Corbin squinted in perplexity. What was Doris doing? Had she—fainted? In another instant, as he watched, a little tawny shape leaped to the top of the balustrade, poised there a moment, and jumped to the ground below. An animal—a tiger! And the soft thud of its contact with the turf showed that it was real, not a hallucination brought on by overwrought nerves.

SHRUBBERY at the bottom of the terrace momentarily hid the creature from view. Then, with a silence almost uncanny, it padded out onto the moon-lit lawn. It paused a moment, swinging its sleek head about as though in quest of an objective or of prey. Some obscure decision was reached. Like a tawny ghost, the tiger trotted toward the driveway and disappeared in the direction of the road.

Melhorn sucked in breath with a rasping noise. "Jeff—that tiger—could it possibly have been—?"

"That's what I'm going to find out," Corbin said metallically. He rose, ran toward the terrace, and climbed over the balustrade. At the threshold of the French windows lay a softly gleaming heap of cloth. He picked the material up and shook it out. A nightgown. Doris' nightgown, obviously. He let it drop back to the floor and went into the room. The bed had been slept in, but now was empty. A short search showed that, except for himself, the room was devoid of any occupant.

The incredible conclusion, then, was inescapable. The tiger he and Melhorn

had seen had been Doris.

Corbin joined Melhorn on the lawn. He nodded in answer to the question on the older man's face. "Doris and the tiger were one and the same, all right. If it hadn't happened before, I'd say it was impossible—downright ridiculous." He shrugged slightly, and his tone hardened. "Anyway, my plan seems to be working out. A tiger moves too fast to follow, but there's only one place to which it . . . she . . . can be going—Amkeddar's estate. Traveling in my car, we should reach there around the same time."

With a gesture, he turned and went swiftly to the roadster in the driveway. When Melhorn had climbed in beside him, he sent the car roaring toward the road with a clash of gears.

CHAPTER IX

Rites of the Tiger

CEDAR Road was a pale gray ribbon under the moon, unwinding through the night-steeped countryside. Corbin drove without lights, hunched over the steering wheel, eyes bleakly intent.

A cool wind whipped past the speeding roadster. It carried the mingled scents of grass and leaves and moist earth. Crickets chirped in the dark fields on either side of the road. Overhead the stars glittered in all their countless multitudes, like jewels adorning the black velvet tapestry of the sky.

Corbin felt a brief surge of nostalgia. It was a night, he thought, for life and hope. It was a night, too, for defeat and death.

He gripped the steering wheel tighter, and his lips thinned with pressure. He wasn't going to think about that.

Presently a familiar stone wall showed up down the road ahead, a lep-

rous gray in the moonlight. Using the forward momentum of the car, Corbin coasted to within some fifty yards or so of the enclosure. Then he turned off the road, stopping behind a concealing fringe of bushes. He and Melhorn left the car quickly and moved to a spot at the edge of the road from where they could watch the gate.

"Hope Dor—the tiger didn't get here ahead of us," Melhorn whispered after a moment.

Corbin shook his head. "I drove fast enough to beat anything on legs, even allowing for short cuts" About to speak again, he checked himself abruptly and nudged Melhorn's arm.

A tiger was trotting up from the other end of the road. It stopped at the gate. Inserting its muzzle between the bars, it growled softly. After a moment a metallic clicking sounded, followed by the squeal of hinges as the gate swung open. The tiger disappeared inside the wall, and the gate squealed and clicked shut.

Corbin's face was set grimly. "It seems we got here first after all. Well, this is it. Now to see if I can put an end to Amkeddar's little game." He started to straighten up, intending to approach and climb the wall. The next instant he froze into startled rigidity.

A *second* tiger was crossing the road directly before the gate, stopping when it had reached the barrier. It, too, growled softly. Again the gate swung open and shut.

CORBIN and Melhorn stared at each other in bewilderment. Corbin whispered:

"That throws a monkey wrench into the works. The question now is— which of those two tigers was Doris? My plan might all too easily go haywire on that point."

"Looking at it the other way around,

Jeff," Melhorn put in, "who was the second tiger? Amkeddar?"

"That might be a good guess."

"... What are you going to do now, Jeff?"

Corbin considered, frowning anxiously. "I'm going to watch a while longer. I have an idea about the appearance of that second tiger."

They settled themselves once more. Long minutes passed. Then, padding almost noiselessly past their hiding place, came a third tiger! This latest arrival also stopped at the gate and was admitted.

Melhorn glanced in startled questioning at Corbin. "Is that what you were waiting for?"

Corbin nodded, eyes sweeping the road watchfully. "I was acting on the old adage that where there's smoke, there's fire. A second tiger could have meant the appearance of more—and did. Notice how what we've seen ties in with the rumor about tigers roaming Sylvan Heights at night? Only they don't roam—they have a definite destination."

Melhorn breathed sharply, "And the visitors Amkeddar receives late at night, Jeff! And... and the hypodermic marks in the arms of Doris and the others Lorrimer told us about! It all fits. As we suspected, the hypodermic marks indicate a drug that gives the ability to... to change. For certain reasons—of which convenience in reaching him may be one—Amkeddar is giving his visitors this ability."

"Or giving it to them as they gradually become established members of his... clientele," Corbin added. Abruptly he raised his hand in a gesture of warning. A fourth tiger had appeared up the road and was trotting quickly toward the gate.

Eyes narrowed and intent, Corbin continued to watch. Within the next ten

minutes over a dozen more arrived. Then came a long interval during which there were no further appearances. From beyond the wall girdling Amkeddar's estate, a faint quick throbbing became audible. It was sustained, compelling, with a swift insistent tempo that caught at the pulses.

Phrr-o-o-oom, br-r-um, br-r-um, br-r-um; phrr-o-o-oom, br-r-um, br-r-um, br-r-um!

CORBIN'S eyes widened startledly.

Drums! Drums, muffled by intervening walls, but obviously nearby, beating out a barbaric intoxicating rhythm. Visions of a ceremonial fire deep in a night-wrapped jungle, of weirdly-costumed savages dancing in homage to a pagan god, momentarily flitted through Corbin's mind.

Melhorn touched Corbin's arm, features twisted in a sort of incredulous perplexity. "Drums, Jeff! What in the world can be going on in there?"

"That's what I intend to find out." Corbin rose purposefully to his feet.

"... You mean you're still going inside?"

"Yes. My original plan was spoiled by that wild animal tamer's nightmare we saw parading through the gate. But something's going on—something important. If I can learn just what, the information may be even more effective against Amkeddar than what I first intended to do. We've waited long enough to be certain that no more tigers will arrive. Besides, those drums wouldn't have started unless everybody was present."

Melhorn nodded slowly. "All right, Jeff—and be careful. I'll stay here and listen. If I hear anything that indicates you've been caught, I'll rush straight to the police."

Corbin lifted a hand in farewell and began moving toward the wall, thread-

ing his way carefully through the tangle of weeds and shrubs. The steady throbbing of the drums was like a growled threat in his ears. He touched the revolver that he carried in a pocket of his dark coat, and his jaw muscles tightened.

Shortly the wall loomed up before him. As he had noticed earlier, it was covered with cracks and overgrown with vines. Climbing over would be easy enough. He chose what seemed an especially suitable place and started up.

Reaching the top, he paused to examine the scene below. The house was dark and lifeless. Light, however, shone behind the small barred windows set high in the walls of the laboratory building. The drumming, somewhat louder now, seemed to be issuing from here. As Corbin listened, another sound became audible—the high thin eery wailing of flutes, rising and falling in time to the swift tempo of the drums. There was something wild and primeval about the music—if music it was—that tugged insistently at long-buried instincts. Corbin felt an insidious urge to seek and kill, to tear at warm quivering flesh, to revel in the scent and taste of fresh hot blood. He shuddered, forcing himself to ignore the music and concentrate on the task at hand.

THE grounds surrounding the house and laboratory still had their untended jungle-like appearance. Carefully, Corbin probed the shadows, searching for guards. A movement in the wilderness of tangled shrubbery caught his eye. He flattened himself against the top of the wall, senses leaping in sudden alarm.

A dark shape moved into a pool of moonlight. Above the weird rhythm of drums and flutes sounded a deep terrified howling. Corbin's eyes narrowed in astonishment. A cow! Untethered,

free to wander about at will, a cow was roaming the grounds.

Nor was it the only one. As Corbin stared, he saw what must have been quite a large number of cows moving restlessly, as though in frightened seeking of escape, about the enclosure. And there were smaller shapes, lighter in color, that could only have been sheep.

He frowned in perplexity. What did the presence of these animals mean? Did it have some connection with the strange gathering in Amkeddar's laboratory?

He intended to find out. If there were guards, they would have difficulty in discovering an intruder among the constantly shifting animals. Reaching the laboratory would present less danger than he had expected.

Corbin squirmed around to the inner side of the wall, lowered his legs over the edge, and with the aid of vines and cracks began to descend. When he had reached the ground, he crouched tensely, listening. There was no movement save that of the animals, no sound above the beat of drums and the wail of flutes save an occasional plaintive cry of a cow or sheep.

Moving from tree to tree and bush to bush like a hunter stalking game, Corbin began to move toward the laboratory. Now a new sound rose, deep-throated growls and snarls, muffled by building walls, that could only have been made by tigers.

Corbin reached the edge of the gravel driveway and stopped for a moment behind a concealing mass of shrubbery. Nearby, at the end of the driveway, loomed the house. Almost directly across from him was the laboratory, alive and menacing with the strange sounds inside it. Still he saw no guards. Listening to the music and the vocalized blood-lust of the tigers, aware of the terror-driven animals wandering

the grounds about him, he began to understand why. The tigers were being incited by the music to a killing frenzy. And if the presence of the cows and sheep outside meant that the tigers were to be released, to attack, it would hardly be safe for a guard—or any other human—to be in the way.

THERE was danger after all, Corbin realized sharply. He had to find some means of shelter before the tigers were loosed. He considered the idea in dismay. It would interfere with his plan to spy on the proceedings in the laboratory.

Perhaps if he were quick—Corbin wasted no further time in taking precautions against discovery. Emerging from behind the shrubbery, he darted quickly across the driveway, reached the deep shadows at the base of the laboratory wall nearest the house.

A solution to his problem presented itself unexpectedly. Towering up beside the wall, close by, was a large tree. He traced the pattern of its outflung boughs, found that one stretched directly beneath a window of the laboratory. Action followed thought automatically. Corbin reached the tree in two quick strides and began to pull himself up.

Gaining the bough he had marked for use, he carefully inched along its length, moving toward the window. The bough was not as thick as he'd hoped it would be, and it bent in creaking protest under his weight. Several times he expected it to break loose and send him plunging to the ground. But it held, and at last he reached the window. Grasping the bars which covered it, he peered eagerly through.

The scene upon which he centered his eyes was like a nightmare or a delusion of a drug-crazed mind made real. The light that filled the interior of the build-

ing Amkeddar called his laboratory came from a number of open braziers, suspended from tripod supports, placed about the walls of the room. Grotesque shadows leaped and danced as the flames within the braziers rose and fell, flickered and writhed. At the far end of the single huge chamber, against a wall covered with a great crimson tapestry upon which was emblazoned in gold the figure of a rampant tiger, was a raised dias crowned by two ornate throne-like chairs. Amkeddar sat in one of the chairs, garbed in a black robe and turban, a smile of sly satisfaction curving his thin lips, a faint mockery glittering in his sleepily lidded jet eyes. In the other chair was—Doris!

Corbin felt an over-mastering surge of anger as he looked at her. Hate for Amkeddar became a thing verging on the brink of madness.

DORIS was clad only in a brief skirt and halter affair fashioned from a tiger skin, her bare arms and legs gleaming whitely in the light from the flaming braziers. She was decked barbarically in a profusion of jeweled ornaments. A headdress that was the preserved upper half of a tiger's head covered her copper-brown hair, which, unbound, hung in thick curls about her slender shoulders. She was staring rigidly before her, features set and immobile like a carving in perfect semblance of life.

Several feet beyond the dias was a huge stone block. A woman lay upon the block, bound my chains fastened to rings in the stone, her frantically writhing brown form naked, her long black hair matted and disheveled by her futile struggles to break free. It was Kumara. And typical of what Corbin already knew of the Indian woman's character, there was no fear or terror on her face, only a withering hatred for

Amkeddar, a cold steely desperation at her plight.

The stone block was an altar, Corbin realized suddenly. Deep channels grooved its top as though to permit liquid to run off into the low shallow trough running around the base. Corbin thought he knew what that liquid was—blood!

Kumara evidently was to be a sacrifice in some hellish rite, which even now was reaching its grim climax.

For circling the block, nose to tail, moving to the eery music in a continuous parade, went almost a score of tigers. Around and around they padded, in a queer jiggling swaying dance, red tongues lolling and slavering, tawny eyes blazing. With growing frequency, the dancers were glancing up at the figure imprisoned on the top of the block. Corbin heard the increasing volume of their growls, impatient, demanding.

The drums pounded louder, the flutes wailed higher, as the music scaled new heights of barbaric frenzy. Despite himself, Corbin felt his pulses race and throb. Again he experienced a sly but compelling urge to seek and kill. He fought it down in a search for the source of the enthralling rhythm. It came, he discovered shortly, from a group of four Indians squatting together to the right of the dias, almost beyond his field of vision. They were stripped to the waist, brown skins glistening with sweat from their efforts.

Finally Amkeddar rose to his feet, tall and satanic in his black garments. A lifted hand brought immediate silence from the musicians. The tigers ceased their dance, to sit in an eager waiting ring about the stone block. At a gesture from Amkeddar, Doris slowly stood up, paganly lovely in her scanty tiger skins and jeweled ornaments.

From his black robe, Amkeddar pulled a long wickedly shining knife.

He extended this to Doris with a few curtly spoken words. She took the knife. Gold-flecked eyes unblinking, face expressionless as an ivory mask, she moved like an automaton to the stone block, poised the blade over Kumara's heart.

AMKEDDAR raised his hand again. All those in the room seemed to be waiting. There was a deep silence, an utter lack of motion, that made the tableau weirdly unreal.

An icy current rushed through Corbin's veins. When Amkeddar's hand came down, he knew, the music would start up again, wilder and swifter than before, Doris' knife would flash down, and the tigers, inflamed to madness by the smell and taste of blood, would rush out into the night, to rend and tear insensately at the cattle and sheep wandering about the grounds.

This latter event was unimportant. But what Doris was going to do in another instant was . . . *murder!* Her entire bearing testified that she was herself a helpless victim of circumstance, an enslaved unwilling dupe; yet the fact of the impending crime remained.

And Kumara—Corbin was in little doubt as to his feelings toward the Indian woman. For her knew respect, admiration, even liking. He couldn't sit by idly and watch her die. And above all, Doris had to be saved from the ghastly deed she was shortly to commit.

But—what could he do? There was no way he could stop the proceedings without betraying his presence. Capture quite likely would mean that he, too, would become a victim of sacrifice.

Corbin shifted his body in an agony of desperation. There was a sudden snapping noise, piercing like a thunder-clap into the deep silence. He found himself plummeting to the ground, to

strike with a numbing thud even before the dismaying realization of what had happened formed completely in his mind.

The bough upon which he had been perched had broken under the pressure of his weight!

From within the laboratory came a medley of startled growls and shouts. The alarm had been given. The presence of a lurker outside was now known. Pursuit—and possibly capture—would swiftly follow.

CHAPTER X

A Nocturnal Visit

ANXIETY swept Corbin like a sudden gale, tearing away the fog that filled his dazed mind. If the fall had crippled him—

Impelled by a frantic sense of dread, he sat up, moving his limbs experimentally. Relief came. There were no sprains or broken bones. He had merely been bruised by his drop, briefly stunned.

From within the building came the pounding of feet and the excited snarls of tigers. Urgency flashed through Corbin. He pulled himself erect and began to run toward the wall, stiffly and clumsily at first, then with increasing limberness. Behind him, he heard a door flung open. A sudden flood of light poured over him, throwing his shadow with grotesque effect on the shrubbery before him and on the wall ahead. A roar of wild confusion enveloped the enclosure as the cattle and sheep, previously uneasy, plunged about in blind panic under the abrupt onslaught of light, noise, and the smell of tigers released by the opened door. Corbin twice narrowly escaped being trampled.

Above the terrified cries of cattle and

sheep and the eager growls of tigers lifted a human voice.

"There he is! After him, you fools! Don't let him get away!"

Corbin darted a glance in his rear. Amkeddar stood framed in the light from the doorway, gesturing furiously at the four Indians. Another glance an instant later showed the entire group of five rushing forward in pursuit.

Desperately Corbin increased his already mad pace. The wall was close, but climbing it would take time. The others might reach him before he had gained the top.

And then—he tripped as one of his pistoning feet caught in a tangle of weeds, fell sprawling. Shouts of triumph rose in unison from Amkeddar and his henchmen.

Clawing wildly to his feet, Corbin measured in dismay the distance to the wall remaining. He'd never make it now. His fall had cost him what little lead he'd had. The only thing left to do was stand and fight it out.

Abruptly he recalled something—the revolver! Unaccustomed to carrying weapons, he'd almost forgotten he had it. Consternation rushed over him in an icy deluge, however, when he reached into the pocket where he had placed the gun. It was gone! With a sick, empty feeling, he realized it had evidently been shaken from his pocket during one of his two falls.

HE SET his lips whitely. He'd have to give battle with his bare hands, then. And at odds of five to one, there could be only one result. He thought wanly of Melhorn. There was little doubt that Melhorn had already been warned and would return presently with the police. But Corbin was grimly certain that he would no longer be alive when they came.

In another moment, and from a to-

tally unexpected quarter, came an interruption which to Corbin meant all the difference between life and death.

The tigers within the building had been goaded to a killing frenzy by the effluvium of terror and of delectable warm flesh given off by the cattle and sheep milling about in chaos on the grounds. Up to this point, some understanding with, or command from, Amkeddar had kept them inside. But now, unable to resist any longer instincts and lusts that drew them as surely and inexorably as the Moon draws tides, they erupted through the doorway in a tawny wave. Snarling in blood-thirsty ferocity, they threw themselves upon the terrified animals within the enclosure, tearing and slashing in savage abandon.

Corbin was vividly aware that the tigers presented a new and even greater danger. In their utterly berserk condition, they would stop at nothing. To get in the way of any one of them would be sheer suicide.

Amkeddar and his cohorts apparently realized this. The sudden appearance of the tigers froze them in their tracks. And then, as the carnage began in all its indescribable uproar and violence, the four Indians scattered in terror. Amkeddar alone stood his ground, glaring baffledly from Corbin to the pandemonium around him. He seemed torn between his desire to flee and his reluctance to let Corbin escape.

The opportunity was too good to miss. Corbin whirled and ran the remaining distance to the wall. Hurling himself desperately at the blanketing vines, he began to scramble up.

Once he glanced back. The flood of light pouring from the doorway of the building behind showed Amkeddar bent on all fours, huddling strangely in his black robes. In the next instant a tiger emerged from beneath the swathing garments. Its blazing eyes settled vin-

dictively on Corbin. Then, as though released from a catapult, it sprang forward, bounding in great leaps toward the wall.

FRANTICALLY, Corbin hauled himself up the few feet separating him from the top. He was none too soon. The tiger's taloned forepaws clutched futilely at the place where his legs had been an instant before.

A raging feline demon, the tiger fell back to the ground. It did not give up the chase immediately, however. It launched itself once more at the wall and sought to clamber up by digging its talons into the vines. But the rope-like strands of vegetation broke under the tiger's weight and the sharpness of its claws. Again it fell back, snarling in impotent rage.

By this time Corbin had swung himself around the top of the wall and was lowering himself down the other side. Dropping the few feet to the ground that remained, he set out at a run toward the spot where he had left Melhorn and the roadster.

The roar of a car motor rose abruptly above the tumult beyond the wall. Corbin felt a wrench of dismay. Alarmed by the bedlam, Melhorn was starting out for the police. If Corbin were felt behind, afoot and unarmed—

The wall was only a temporary obstacle, Corbin knew. Amkeddar wouldn't give up easily. Even now, in his tiger's body, he must be racing toward the gate.

In desperation Corbin whipped himself to greater speed. He saw the car in the moonlight, moving toward the road. With his last reserves of strength, he released a shout.

"Wait! Here I am! It's Jeff!"

The sudden grinding of brakes was like music to Corbin. He reached the car and tumbled in without bothering to

open the door.

"Let's go!" he gasped. "And fast!"

A glance at Corbin's strained, haggard features galvanized Melhorn into motion. He jerked the roadster into gear, stamped down on the accelerator. At ever-increasing speed, they shot down the road, toward the highway.

The frightful cacophony of animal growls and screams from behind the wall faded into the distance, finally died. There was only the muted roar of the car engine, the whir of tires on concrete, the soothing trill of crickets in the night-shrouded fields.

Slowly the tension drained from Corbin's aching body. He relaxed in his seat, breathing deeply of the cool air that streamed past. For his thoughts, however, there was no respite. Darkly, grimly, he was aware that his deadly contest with Amkeddar was far from being over. Though not exactly a prisoner in the enemy camp, Doris was still a helpless captive, bound by an evil influence more effective than chains. In that respect, the score remained in Amkeddar's favor.

CORBIN found a shred of comfort in the fact that his efforts hadn't been entirely without profit. He knew now what went on within the walls of Amkeddar's estate. And he had at once prevented Doris from being used as an unwitting tool for murder and gained a reprieve for Kumara, the intended victim. Amkeddar's vicious ceremony had been so completely disrupted that there was little if any possibility of his starting all over this night.

They reached the main highway. Melhorn turned into it, only then slackening the roadster's meteoric pace. After a moment he spoke.

"What in the world was that racket back there all about, Jeff? What happened?"

Tersely Corbin explained. He told of climbing the tree, and of what he had seen taking place inside the building which was supposed to be Amkeddar's laboratory. Then he detailed the sequence of events following the alarm given by his unexpected plunge to the ground and culminating in his return to the car. He went on:

"A number of things are now clear. Amkeddar's research work is just a blind. What he's actually doing is running some fantastic sort of cult, giving its members the ability to change from human to tiger form. The animals he buys, apparently for his experiments, are really used as victims in orgies of killing. And it's all decked out in fancy trimmings, from a sacrificial ceremony that excites the tiger congregation to the proper pitch of blood-thirstiness, to outdoor surroundings that have an appropriately jungle-like atmosphere.

"We already know that Amkeddar's converts are wealthy residents of Sylvan Heights. There are the rumors you mentioned about Amkeddar's receiving visits late at night from wealthy women—rumors which have a sound basis in fact when you consider that they were in all probability circulated by the chauffeurs who in the beginning drove these women to Amkeddar's place. There are the hypodermic marks in the arms of numerous wealthy persons that Lorrimer told us about, marks the same as those borne by Doris. And there is the strange reluctance of numerous wealthy persons, also noted by Lorrimer, to discuss tigers in any manner or form. This reluctance is understandable enough, considering that these persons most likely are members of Amkeddar's cult and have the ability to change into tigers.

"And finally—why are people of this class drawn to Amkeddar?" Corbin nodded at Melhorn. "You supplied that

explanation. It's because they are of the amoral, bored type, with too much money and too much time, who jump at anything that offers novelty—particularly in the way of strange and unusual thrills. With his cult, Amkeddar is supplying this kind of entertainment. It beats a night club hollow. And you can bet it's expensive. Amkeddar's cultists are undoubtedly paying through the nose for their fun—with blackmail or extortion through hypnotism staring them in the face if they try to back out.

"But—is money the motive for Amkeddar's cult? I don't think so. It doesn't agree with what I've pieced together of Amkeddar's character. He's the sort who plays for the highest possible stakes. Money is a necessity, but only a minor factor. What he's after is something else—something that would make me lose a lot of sleep if I knew what it was."

MELHORN drove in thoughtful silence. Peering about him, Corbin saw that they were near the house. Abruptly Melhorn asked:

"What about the Indian woman—Kumara? Why should Amkeddar want her killed as a sacrifice?"

"To get rid of her, obviously," Corbin said. "The sacrifice part was just a lot of mumbo-jumbo intended to gloss over the fact of it being outright murder. Amkeddar evidently has grown tired of Kumara, and plans to have Doris take her place. Kumara wouldn't stand for that, naturally, and it's certain that she's strongly opposed to what Amkeddar is doing, as regards the cult. That's two counts against her from friend Amkeddar's viewpoint." Corbin's tone took on a troubled note.

"Kumara quite probably saved our lives that night Amkeddar got the drop on us. He was going to do something pretty drastic, but she argued him out

of it. I've partly paid her back for that by accidentally ruining Amkeddar's plans for the night. He'll try again, though—and soon."

Melhorn said anxiously, "That means Doris is still in danger of being forced to commit murder."

Corbin nodded with grave emphasis. "I've got to stop it somehow. And save Kumara at the same time. This last isn't just a side issue. She'd be immensely valuable to us as a witness against Amkeddar. If we could get her to the police, she'd be only too glad to tell everything she knows in revenge for what Amkeddar tried to do to her." Corbin straightened sharply, snapping his fingers. "Or the other way around—get the police to her! It could be done. We could easily manage to have the police search Amkeddar's estate on the charge that he's breaking the new anti-vivisection law. And if we were along, to steer the search to Kumara—"

"That's it, Jeff!" Melhorn cried excitedly. "It's . . . why, it's beautiful! Once arrested by the police, Amkeddar could be forced to free Doris from his control!"

"We'll get Lorrimer in on it," Corbin added. "He'll be valuable to us in that he knows the people in Sylvan Heights, and can obtain affidavits from those Amkeddar purchased animals. Many, if not all, must be decent people, humane enough to overlook profits and add their suspicious to ours. We'll get started as soon as it's light. Nobody would be interested in our ideas at this hour."

They had reached the driveway of the house. Melhorn turned into it, pulling to a stop before the garage.

"What are you going to do now, Jeff?"

"Watch for Doris to return. There's little doubt that she will. Amkeddar would hardly risk a kidnapping charge

at this point, even though Doris would testify in his favor. He has too much to hide at his place. You may as well go inside and get some sleep."

MELHORN shook his head. "I'll watch with you. I wouldn't be able to sleep unless I was sure Doris had gotten back."

Corbin led the way from the car, suddenly aware of aching muscles and innumerable bruises. He and Melhorn glided quietly into the shrubbery bordering the driveway, from where they could once more watch the house and garden. They settled down to wait. The moon was low in the sky, but still bright enough to make close observation possible.

They didn't have to wait long. Barely fifteen minutes passed, when a tiger came padding across the moon-lit lawn, approaching from the lower end of the driveway. It paused a moment near the bottom of the terrace steps. Corbin stared as he made a sudden discovery. The tiger held something in its mouth—something that seemed flat, oblong in shape, and black.

Corbin glanced appraisingly at Melhorn. The other's face mirrored a startled question. Shrugging slightly, Corbin peered once more at the steps. The tiger was gone, apparently having ascended.

Corbin moved his eyes along the terrace, to the French windows of Doris' room. Presently an ethereal white shape rose from below the concealment of the balustrade, straightening as though from a stooping position. It was Doris. She gazed a moment at the garden, then turned. The French windows swunk open and closed. Quiet fell.

Corbin waited for what he judged was a safe interval. Nothing else happened. The quiet remained undisturbed.

Finally Corbin nodded at Melhorn and stood up.

"It's all over—for this time, anyway."

Melhorn said, "I'd certainly like to know what that object was that she carried."

"We can try to find out in the morning. For the time being, it would be best to leave her alone."

They entered the house from the front. In the upper hall, near the doors of their respective rooms, they paused momentarily. Corbin said:

"We'll have to be up as soon as it's light. There's a lot to do, and we can't give Amkeddar any time to prepare a defense—or offense."

Melhorn inclined his head. "I'll see that we're up in time, Jeff. Get all the sleep you can in the meanwhile. You need it." He gripped Corbin's arm in wordless affection, then turned into his room.

Entering his own room, Corbin began to undress; exhaustion weighting his movements. But when he had stretched out on the bed, sleep refused to come. He stared without seeing into the pale silver moonlight streaming through the windows nearby, thinking thoughts that were at once confident and despairing.

HE DIDN'T know how much later it was when a faint, almost inaudible sound reached him. He stiffened in sudden, complete alertness. Slowly, carefully, the door of his room was swinging open! He lay still after his first, involuntary motion, watching from beneath slitted eyes.

Ghost-like, a white figure slipped into the room. Doris! Corbin's mind flamed with wonder. What did it mean? The stealthiness of the girl's actions warned him that it could be nothing pleasant.

She closed the door softly, with almost no sound. Then she turned and

began to creep toward the bed. In her right hand she held a small object that shone glassily. Her face had a somnambulist lack of expression which together with her deliberate, secretive advance was oddly frightening.

Nerves tense as a wound spring, Corbin waited and watched, hardly daring to breathe. Doris reached the bed, bent over it. A flash of sinister, dark purpose lit her tawny eyes. Now Corbin saw what it was that she held in her hand. Memory came to him with livid sharpness of the small black oblong which Doris earlier, in her tiger guise, had carried in her mouth. It had been a case, he realized now. A case for—

A hypodermic syringe, filled with a strange amber fluid.

Even as this final thought raced through his mind, Doris' hand descended in an abrupt, appallingly swift movement. The deadly needle shot like an arrow toward Corbin's arm.

CHAPTER XI

Council of War

CORBIN whipped aside with frantic speed. He felt the girl's fingers graze the skin of his biceps. At his motion, she recoiled instinctively, in shocked surprise, as though she had touched fire. Before she could recover, he whirled over on the bed and caught her wrist in a bear-trap grip.

Under the fierce pressure of his clutching fingers, she seemed to go wild. Oddly, there was nothing in it of fright, of terrified effort to escape capture. Rather it seemed the wildness of one thwarted in the fanatical pursuit of a mission, striving desperately to avoid failure.

She did not release the hypodermic. She clung to it stubbornly, as though resolved to use it despite all Corbin's re-

sistance. With all the strength of her lithe, athletic body, she heaved and twisted in a violent struggle to free her wrist. The nails of her free hand gouged into Corbin's flesh as she sought to pry his fingers loose. Her frenzied contortions made her hair swirl in tumultuous disarray over her face. Except for her labored breathing, she made no sound.

In his prone position on the bed, Corbin was at a disadvantage. Though stronger than the girl, he had nothing against which to brace himself for effective use of his superior muscles. Each time he tried to gather his legs under him, he was pulled once more flat on his chest. Doris had her bare legs planted firmly on the floor and was straining backward as she fought. To pull against her meant being drawn off the bed. He could only retain his hold on her wrist and suffer the torture of her clawing fingers. He could not let go for even the precious split-second it would take him to gain his feet. She was too furiously determined to complete the task for which she had come. He could take no slightest risk of the hypodermic being brought into contact with his body.

There was no poison in the hypodermic, he knew. Amkeddar would hardly adopt a course so dangerously obvious. What that needle most likely contained was a drug that would destroy his will, enslave him as Doris had been enslaved.

CORBIN was aware that Amkeddar had recognized him during the pursuit within the wall. There had been sufficient light streaming through the doors of the building where the interrupted ceremony had been taking place. Amkeddar had realized that Corbin had been spying upon the tiger ritual, had gained knowledge which in one way or another could be used against him. Corbin thus had quickly to be gotten out of

the way. It had taken no great mental feat on Amkeddar's part to guess that Corbin was staying secretly at the Melhorn residence. And with Doris in the same house, a plan for preventing further interference from Corbin had been a simple matter. But Amkeddar had overlooked the fact that Corbin may not have been asleep when Doris searched for and found him.

Corbin, however, was grimly conscious that he was by no means out of danger yet. Slowly and inexorably, he was being pulled off the bed. He felt one of his legs touch the floor. It gave him a sudden idea. Working his foot under the bed to serve as a prop, he abruptly ceased pulling against Doris and lunged forward with his arm. It was unexpected. Straining backward, the lunge left her momentarily off balance. He gave her no opportunity to brace herself again. With his free leg now supplying the necessary leverage, he jerked her toward him.

The powerful tug had the effect of whirling her around. Her back hit the side of the bed. He held her pinned there, while he pulled himself forward on his elbows. His other arm encircled her, adding another grip to her wrist. Then, holding her with one hand and working with the other, he began to pry the hypodermic loose. It was anything but easy. In a fury of despair, the girl threshed and writhed, scratched and bit. Persisting with bleak, dogged single-mindedness of purpose, Corbin finally tore the needle free, hurling it the length of the room behind him.

Only then did he release her. She scrambled erect, breathing heavily, her disheveled hair framing a face that was deathly pale and twisted with rage.

Corbin felt a sudden wrench of sadness. Gently, pleadingly, he grasped the girl's shoulders.

"Doris—snap out of it! You're not

in your right mind. You'd never have allowed Amkeddar to put you up to anything like this if you were."

Furiously, she shook his hands loose. "Let go! Don't touch me! Haven't you manhandled me enough?"

"You're blaming me for this," Corbin said bitterly. "It isn't my fault. I had to protect myself."

"Why are you here—in this house? What do you think gives you any right to intrude in my affairs?"

"I'm trying to help you, Doris. Can't you understand that Amkeddar has some kind of devilish hold over you! He's making you do things—things like this—that you'd never consider doing if you were normal."

"That's a filthy lie! And what's more, I don't need or want your help. You're a snooping meddler." Her low, angry voice broke on a sob. "I . . . I hate you! I never want to see you again!" For an instant her tawny eyes fixed his with a glare of defiance. Then, whirling, she ran from the room.

CORBIN stood motionless, the girl's accusations burning like acid in his mind. A somnolent quiet followed her departure. The struggle, taking place almost noiselessly, had not aroused the other occupants of the house.

Finally Corbin stirred. He went to the door, swung it shut, and locked it. Switching on the light, he searched until he found the spot where the flung hypodermic had landed. It lay in scattered fragments on the rug. A damp splotch on the wall showed where it had hit.

One by one, he picked up the shards. He wrapped them in a spare handkerchief, which he deposited in a bureau drawer. Then he lit a cigarette, switched off the light, and went to stand before the windows. He was still there when the first gray light of dawn appeared in the sky.

Corbin was finishing breakfast, which had been brought to his room on a tray by the butler several minutes before, when Melhorn and Lorrimer entered. After greetings had been exchanged, Melhorn explained:

"I sent for George, here, the first thing I did this morning. Thought we'd give you a chance to dress and eat before dropping in." He peered narrowly at Corbin a moment. "What's the matter, Jeff, couldn't you sleep?"

Corbin grinned wanly. "Something like that."

Lorrimer said, "I hope I wasn't called out of bed so early just to prescribe a dose of sleeping tablets. What's this all about, anyway? Barton wouldn't reveal anything over the phone, except that you needed my help in a certain matter."

Corbin drained his coffee cup and lit a cigarette. Then he began swiftly to bring Lorrimer up to date on the events that had transpired since their last meeting.

He told of the failure of sedatives in keeping Doris in bed, to prevent her from paying another visit to Amkeddar. Next he told of his plan to follow Doris on another of her nocturnal trips, with the intention of forcing Amkeddar to release her from his control. He explained its outcome, describing all that had taken place, from the tigers that he and Melhorn had seen entering Amkeddar's estate, to the tiger ceremony and his near escape from death. He did not omit what he and Melhorn had witnessed upon their return to the house. Finally he detailed the facts and deductions reached thus far concerning Amkeddar's activities and the motives and people involved.

LORRIMER digested the information thoughtfully. A puzzled frown appeared on his blunt features. "You

seem to have left something out—a possible explanation for the object which the tiger . . . Doris, that is . . . carried when returning here. There might have been a dangerous purpose for it, you know, considering the way you ruined Amkeddar's little party."

"There was," Corbin said. "I was saving that for the last." While Lorrimer and Melhorn watched on in perplexity, he rose and removed from the bureau drawer the handkerchief in which he had wrapped the hypodermic fragments. As he unfolded the handkerchief Corbin said, "The object Doris carried was a case—a case for this." He revealed the broken hypodermic.

Melhorn gasped, "But, Jeff, how in the world did you happen to get hold of it?"

"Doris brought it in last night, shortly after I went to bed. She had every intention of sticking the needle in my arm and injecting me with the fluid that was in the tube. I was lucky enough to be still awake, but as it was we had quite a little wrestling match before I got the hypodermic away from her. Too bad it broke. The fluid obviously was some kind of dope for making me highly susceptible to Amkeddar's charms. We could have used something like that against him."

Melhorn's face was pale with anger. "That devil! Using Doris for such rotten tricks— First the attempted murder of that Indian girl, and now this!"

"Any man capable of holding such evil power over the lives of innocent persons shouldn't be allowed to live," Lorrimer added. "With a character like Amkeddar has shown himself to have, he's worse than a mad dog. And possessing a weapon in the form of a drug that destroys the will, there's no limit to what he may try." He looked grimly at Corbin. "After what you've told me,

I'm more than willing to help you in any way I can. But what is there that I can possibly do?"

"First of all, I'd better explain my plan," Corbin answered. "The whole thing revolves around the Indian girl, Kumara. After the attempt on her life as a sacrifice in the tiger ceremony, she'll jump at the chance to get back at Amkeddar. The problem is to get her into the hands of the police. If it can be done, she'll spill everything she knows about Amkeddar, and he can be arrested and forced to free Doris from his control.

"**WE COULDN'T** bring Kumara to the police. That requires taking her right from under Amkeddar's hook nose, and after my excursion of last night, he's most likely just begging for me to pay him another visit. Only one thing is left to do—bring the police to Kumara. We can manage that quite simply by accusing Amkeddar of having broken the new anti-vivisection law and getting the police to search his estate. Once there, we can steer the search around to Kumara." Corbin nodded at Lorrimer:

"Where you come in is clear enough by now. Obviously, we can't just go to the police and get them to search on the strength of our suspicions. We'll have to have more or less definite proof. We'll need witnesses or affidavits from the people who sold Amkeddar animals, and from people who have heard animal screams coming from Amkeddar's estate. You know who these people are and where to find them. They trust you, and with you to act as our agent, there shouldn't be much difficulty in getting them to help us."

Lorrimer grinned confidently. "Don't worry about that angle. So many of them owe me unpaid bills that they'll be more than glad to do anything I ask."

"When do we start?"

"At once!" Corbin said. "The sooner the better, in fact. You can bet Amkeddar knows by now that his scheme to get rid of me has fallen through. He knows I'll strike at him again, and he won't be letting any grass grow under his feet."

"Let's go, then," Lorrimer said. "My car's outside."

CHAPTER XII

Dr. Amkeddar Is Willing

CHIEF of Police Frank Rydell was a tall, gaunt raw-boned man who wore his dark blue business suit with the awkwardness of a backwoods farmer. He had pale brown hair that straggled over his forehead in lank wisps and pale blue eyes that were slightly watery and more than slightly apologetic. He gave the impression of one put into office on the basis of past favors received rather than ability, or perhaps simply because nobody else wanted the job. He looked tired and distressed, as though he worked hard all day to please everybody but found himself playing both ends against the middle.

Corbin, Melhorn, and Lorrimer had been in Rydell's office for almost an hour. Rydell had reluctantly and inexpertly questioned the four witnesses Lorrimer had managed to bring along. The witnesses had since been dismissed, and at present Rydell was engaged in reading through a sheaf of affidavits and bills of sale. He seemed to have difficulty keeping his mind on the task. When not shifting in his chair, he alternated between fingering his long nose and scratching his bony jaw. His unhappy expression had increased.

Finally Rydell looked up. He cleared his throat hesitantly. "This stuff, here,

it doesn't exactly *prove* Dr. Amkeddar has been doing what you said he was doing to animals. Vivisecting 'em."

"It's perfectly sufficient as a basis upon which to take action," Corbin said. He tried to keep out of his voice the growing irritation he felt. It had been a difficult and busy morning. Obtaining the witnesses and papers hadn't proved as easy as it had seemed in the beginning. And Rydell, with his timid skepticism and general incompetence, wasn't helping matters any.

"You're a lawyer," Rydell told Corbin. "You ought to know you got to have real proof if you want to charge somebody with something. I listened to what those people had to say, and I looked over this stuff, here, but I ain't seen or heard nothing yet to prove Dr. Amkeddar has actually been cutting up animals. Your case against him is just a lot of guesswork."

"I don't agree that it's guesswork, but considering it in that light, you'll have to admit it's mighty accurate," Corbin pointed out. "Why should Amkeddar buy cattle and sheep in the first place? To do his own butchering? Hardly likely. Even if he was willing to undergo all the unnecessary trouble and expense, the period of time between each date of purchase shows that he and his staff couldn't possibly consume the amount of meat involved."

"And there are the screams. When you butcher animals, you kill them as quickly and painlessly as possible. You don't torture them to death. Cows and sheep aren't in the habit of screaming. They do it only when in pain—which means when somebody's carving them up without first having bothered to kill them or render them unconscious. And that comes directly under the provisions of the anti-vivisection law."

"Lawyer's talk!" Rydell grunted. "You make it listen nice, but it still

don't prove anything. You can't guess when a law is broke. You got to know. You got to have facts."

"Circumstances alter cases," Corbin persisted doggedly. "Sometimes it's necessary to carry out the spirit if not the letter of a law. This is one of those times. Indications if not facts show that Amkeddar is practicing vivisection. To allow him benefit of the doubt in the legal sense, may very well mean permitting him to continue indefinitely his torturing of helpless animals. And that violates every instinct of kindness and humanity written into the anti-vivisection law."

RYDELL scratched his jaw uncertainly. "I can't arrest Dr. Amkeddar just for maybe breaking a law."

"I didn't say anything about arresting him."

"Then what in tarnation do you want?"

"I want you to search Amkeddar's place to see if he has been practicing vivisection as indications show."

Rydell rubbed his nose and looked worried. "Dr. Amkeddar's a popular person hereabouts. Tied in with a lot of important people. . . ."

Melhorn snapped, "If that's the only thing that carries any weight with you, then it might interest you to know that for every person who will support Amkeddar's side, I can obtain at least two who will support ours."

Rydell thought that over and began to look less worried. "But if we don't find anything, and Dr. Amkeddar sues or makes charges, it'd still be pretty tough."

"You can set your mind easy on that point," Melhorn said. "My friends and I will accept any and all responsibility for what may happen."

"All right," Rydell said. "I'll have a couple of the boys go out to Dr. Am-

keddar's place this afternoon and look around."

Corbin put his hands on Rydell's desk. "Let's understand each other. The search is going to start right now, and we're going along. And you're going to be there to take charge of things. This may develop into something big. If it does, your men wouldn't be able to handle it alone."

"Say, what makes you think you can order me around?" Rydell demanded indignantly.

"I'll answer that," Lorrimer said. "We're just taxpayers. It's just our money that's paying you to do your job. And by heaven, if you don't stop this beating around the bush and do what it is plainly your duty, we'll see that you're replaced by someone who'll do it."

Rydell looked at his desk as if it were the only friend he had left. Then, shrugging bitterly, he rose. "I'll get things ready," he muttered.

SOME twenty minutes later, Lorrimer pulled his battered coupe to a stop before the gate in the wall enclosing Amkeddar's estate. Corbin was first from the car. He glanced back at the sedan in which Rydell and four detectives had followed. With reluctant slowness, Rydell climbed out. His men, however, appeared with alacrity, obviously eager for action.

One of Amkeddar's turbaned Indian servants was on duty at the gate. He wasn't Chondhas, Corbin noted. The Indian's black eyes surveyed the group expressionlessly.

"What do the *Sahibs* wish?"

"We want to see Dr. Amkeddar," Rydell answered.

"Who shall I tell the master is calling?"

"The police."

If any alarm appeared on the In-

dian's features, it was hidden as he performed a quick bow. "If you will please wait, I will inform the master." He turned and trotted swiftly up the driveway.

Watching, Corbin saw the man turn into the smaller building, where the tiger ceremony had taken place. He wondered tensely what Amkeddar's reaction would be. Would Amkeddar refuse to admit Rydell?

Within a few minutes, the Indian returned. He said nothing, but began at once to unlock the gate.

Corbin glanced at Melhorn in sudden anxiety. Melhorn's eyes were narrowed. He whispered:

"I don't like this at all, Jeff. It's too pat."

Rydell and his four detectives had climbed back into their sedan. Following suit, Corbin, Melhorn, and Lorrimer squeezed once more into the coupe. They drove through the gate, stopping near the upper end of the driveway.

Amkeddar stood in the open doorway of the smaller building. He was dressed in a white laboratory smock and turban, and was drying his hands on a towel. As the two groups began emerging from the cars, he handed the towel to an Indian assistant behind him, also attired in a white smock and turban, and sauntered up casually. He surveyed the arrivals with a politely quizzical expression. His black eyes glittered icily when they settled on Corbin and Melhorn, but in another moment he concealed his reaction to their presence behind a smile of pretended delight.

"Ah, Mr. Corbin and Mr. Melhorn! So nice of you to visit me again."

Corbin grunted, "Your hospitality being what it is, we just couldn't stay away."

"Indeed?" Amkeddar's smile hardened at the edges. "I am honored—especially since you were considerate

enough to bring representatives of the police to share it with you."

Rydell shifted uncomfortably. "This ain't exactly a visit, Dr. Amkeddar."

THE Indian looked surprised and pained. "Not a visit? Then will you be so kind as to tell me to what I owe the pleasure of your call?"

"We came to search your place," Rydell said.

"How interesting! And what do intend to search for?"

"These gentlemen, here"—Rydell indicated Corbin, Melhorn, and Lorrimer—"have the idea that you've broken the new anti-vivisection law. They say you've been cutting up live animals in your experiments."

Amkeddar's surprise this time was genuine. And there was not a little bewilderment mingled with it. Evidently he hadn't expected an attack from this direction.

"I—practicing vivisection?" He chuckled in amusement. "I can assure you that is a lot of nonsense. My work involves experimentation with the glands of living animals. Vivisection is not connected with it, however. My method is based simply upon chemical injections into the bloodstream and their effects upon various glands as manifested by changes in temperature, pulse, respiration, and metabolic rate."

Rydell nodded understandingly. "Then you won't mind if we just sort of look around a bit?"

"Of course not! You are perfectly welcome." Amkeddar gestured at the smaller building, from which he had emerged. "That is my laboratory. If you will kindly step inside, you will see that the charges against me are quite groundless."

Corbin decided that Amkeddar was being much too amenable. He felt a

growing dismay as he followed the others into the building.

The laboratory proved to be just that—a laboratory. The tapestry, the throne-like chairs, the sacrificial block—all the ceremonial trappings, in short—were gone. Corbin's despairing gaze passed over neat white work tables laden with apparatus, glass cabinets filled with bottles of chemicals, and a variety of animals in cages. Peering at the cages, he saw that they contained monkeys, dogs, guinea pigs, and rabbits. Three of the cages, especially large and set apart from the others, held tigers. One seemed to be asleep. The other two lay sprawled out at full length, regarding the intruders solemnly.

Corbin's thoughts were bitter. His position with Rydell would have been greatly strengthened had he been able to catch Amkeddar with the evidences of last night's ritual and massacre left intact. But the wily Indian all too apparently had anticipated that Corbin might bring the police. He and his four servants must have labored like demons to transform the building. Undoubtedly, the litter of blood and dead left by the tigers in their berserk attack upon the cattle and sheep outside, had been cleaned up also. Everything, in fact, which would have appeared even slightly suspicious, had most probably been removed.

CORBIN fought down his unease. Amkeddar had shown shrewd foresight in his precautions, but he couldn't have prepared for every eventuality. There was an excellent chance that Amkeddar had overlooked the possibility of Corbin striking at him through Kumara. The Indian girl, likely imprisoned somewhere in the house, was Corbin's ace in the hole.

Amkeddar waved a lean brown hand

about the room. "As you can see," he told Rydell, "my laboratory contains no equipment for practicing vivisection. You have my sympathy for having been brought on a fool's quest." His black eyes rested for an instant on Corbin. Mockery and triumph glittered in their depths.

Rydell nodded emphatic agreement. "Didn't think you was the type anyway, Dr. Amkeddar. Sorry to have bothered you." He glanced accusingly at Corbin, Melhorn, and Lorrimer. "Well, if you gentlemen are satisfied, we might as well go. We've wasted enough of Dr. Amkeddar's time."

"Not so fast," Corbin snapped. "I said Amkeddar was practicing vivisection, and I can still prove it."

"What do you mean?" Rydell demanded irritably.

Amkeddar chuckled, though his jet orbs had narrowed in sudden wariness. "Mr. Corbin, if I may be pardoned for saying so, is out of his mind. Perhaps now he will insist that I have... ah... hidden the vivisection tools."

Corbin said evenly, "That's just what you've done." He looked grimly at Rydell. "I said I can prove it, and I will. Listen. Amkeddar has an Indian girl on his staff by the name of Kumara. She knows he has been practicing... vivisection. She's strongly opposed to it. In fact, she got in touch with me and asked me to bring the police because she was afraid to do it herself. Amkeddar got wind of what we were up to and hid everything. He's keeping Kumara a prisoner right now, since he knows she'll testify against him." Corbin swung on Amkeddar. "All right—where are you hiding her? If you're as innocent as you claim, bring her out so that we can talk to her."

Amkeddar smiled slightly and shrugged. "I regret to say that Ku-

mara has left my service."

"That's a lie!" Corbin shot out. "She's somewhere on this estate—and you know it!"

Amkeddar's tone hardened. "Very well, Mr. Corbin, if you're so certain of that, I invite you to search."

"I intended to do that anyway," Corbin grunted. He turned to Rydell. "Come on, let's get started. We'll go over the house first."

Features twisted in distress, Rydell shifted irresolutely. "But if Dr. Amkeddar says the girl left—"

"What he says means nothing to me," Corbin stated flatly. "Now are you going to come along, or do you want to hold hands with him while I search alone?"

RYDELL stirred reluctantly into motion. With an apologetic look at Amkeddar, he detailed one of the detectives to remain at the laboratory with the assistant. Amkeddar himself was to accompany them. Those arrangements made, he donned a martyred expression and started for the house.

The building was a two-storied, old-fashioned stone structure. Inside, it had been modernized and its numerous rooms fitted out with luxurious and exotic Oriental furnishings.

Rydell searched perfunctorily. The three detectives, however, were enthusiastic. Instructed by Corbin, they took special pains to hunt for concealed rooms and secret openings. But though the house was investigated thoroughly from top to bottom, no trace of Kumara was found.

Raging despair filled Corbin. He allowed nothing of it to show in his face. He wished to add no further satisfaction to the triumph evident in Amkeddar's thin-lipped, jerring smile.

As they strode from the building,

Rydell told Corbin, "Hope you're convinced by now that the girl left like Dr. Amkeddar said. You could've took his word for it and saved us all a lot of trouble."

"I'm not through yet," Corbin growled. "There's still the laboratory."

Rydell opened his mouth, then closed it as he took in the expression on Corbin's face. He shook his head sadly, hopelessly.

Flanked by Melhorn and Lorrimer and followed by the three detectives whose enthusiasm was now definitely on the wane, Corbin strode into the smaller building. The detective left on guard there sat on a laboratory table, swinging his legs. The Indian assistant was perched on a stool, his brown face wearing a look of stolid patience. All three of the tigers were asleep now. The other animals stirred nervously, but remained silent.

Glancing about the laboratory, Corbin noticed a door at the far end. It gave into a large, littered storeroom. Assisted by Melhorn, Lorrimer, and the detectives, he proceeded to go through it. He found the ceremonial fixtures, each article having cleverly been scattered in various parts of the room. He shrugged. Placed away like this, out of their original setting, they meant nothing. He continued the search until at last it was painfully clear that Kumara was not present.

He returned to the laboratory. Ignoring the sardonic amusement on Amkeddar's hawkish face, he led the way outside in an examination of the grounds. This last resort proved as fruitless as the other efforts had been. Wearily, dejectedly, he strode back to the laboratory.

RYDELL stood in the doorway with Amkeddar. As Corbin and the

others approached, he faced them and demanded:

"Well? Satisfied now?"

Corbin shook his head slowly. "Amkeddar is hiding the girl somewhere. He just seems to have been clever enough to have her taken a safe distance away."

Rydell emitted a grunt of disgust and turned to the suavely smiling Indian at his side. "Sorry to have put you through all this trouble, Dr. Amkeddar. But you understand that it ain't my fault."

"Of course," Amkeddar affirmed sympathetically. "Even those with the best intentions can be led astray by fools."

Highly gratified, Rydell shook Amkeddar's hand warmly and herded his detectives into the sedan. Melhorn and Lorrimer started toward their own car. Corbin lingered deliberately behind as a nebulous idea coalesced suddenly into grim purpose. Facing Amkeddar, he spoke softly, surely, and swiftly.

"This is the last time I'll try to be cute. From now on I pull no punches. So in fair warning I'll inform you that I'm watching Doris' windows at night in the garden. If she leaves again to keep a date at one of your filthy tiger get-togethers, I'm going to kill you. Do you understand? If she leaves again, I'm going to get you—one way or another."

The Indian's face was demoniac with the rage and hate he no longer tried to conceal. "So it's to be a shooting war, Mr. Corbin?"

Corbin nodded with bleak emphasis. "A shooting war Dr. Amkeddar." He met the furiously glittering black eyes before him in a challenge more eloquent than words. Then he spun on his heel and entered the car in which Melhorn and Lorrimer waited.

CHAPTER XIII

Trap for a Tiger

TRAILING clouds of cigarette smoke, Corbin savagely paced the floor of Melhorn's library. Melhorn and Lorrimer were seated in chairs nearby, gazing listlessly at the rug. Afternoon sunlight, streaming in a golden flood through the tall windows of the room, glistened on numerous bottles and empty glasses, indicating a mid-day repast that had been stimulating if not exactly nourishing.

"He had Kumara driven away somewhere—that's the only possible answer," Corbin announced at last, coming to an abrupt halt. "I happen to know Amkeddar has four male Indian servants. We saw only two at the estate. The other two must have been the ones who took her away."

"Maybe we should have hid out for a while and watched the gate," Lorrimer said. "If Amkeddar actually had the girl taken away, he'd have given an all-clear signal after our departure, and the two servants would have brought her back."

Melhorn shook his head somberly.

"Amkeddar's too smooth to have been taken in with a trick like that. Those preparations he made for our visit show that he thought of everything."

Corbin resumed his restless pacing. "Those three tigers . . ." he mused. "I was too intent on the search to think of it at the time, but now the question arises of whether those three tigers were animal—or human. If human—" He stopped as though a wall had risen suddenly before him. "Three tigers! And Kumara and the two missing Indians—three!"

Melhorn sat up sharply in his chair, breath leaving him in a gasp.

Lorrimer said softly, "Good Lord!"

Corbin released a short, bitter laugh and dropped onto a couch across from the others. "That's the answer, of course. And it was under my nose all the time. What a blind fool I've been."

"Why blame yourself, Jeff?" Melhorn said. "George and I didn't think of it either. And for that matter, if one of us had thought of it at the time, what good would it have done? Rydell was sick of the whole business, and if we'd told him our suspicions, he'd have arrested us all as a bunch of lunatics."

"Added to that," Lorrimer put in, "Amkeddar had Rydell eating out of his hand. He'd have denied our accusations, and Rydell would have accepted it as Bible proof."

MELHORN frowned puzzledly. "But if those three tigers actually were Kumara and the two missing Indian servants, what could have been Amkeddar's purpose in adding the two servants to the trick?"

"Simple psychology," Corbin said. "You see three where you're looking for one. Therefore it doesn't occur to you that the one you're looking for may be one of the three in plain sight. The purloined letter idea, with variations. And it worked—as we now know all too well."

There was a long silence. Lorrimer muttered:

"Looks like Amkeddar has us beaten at every turn. There doesn't seem to be anything that we can do now."

Corbin straightened suddenly, lips twisting in a hard grin. "I wouldn't say so. There's going to be a lot of action—and soon." He told Lorrimer and Melhorn of the parting exchange of hostilities between Amkeddar and himself.

Melhorn exclaimed, "But good heavens, Jeff, you told him you were watching in the garden! For all you

know, he may come as a tiger—creep up on you!"

"Exactly!" Corbin said. "I did it as a deliberate suggestion. If he shows up, I'll be waiting for him with a hunting rifle. And I'm pretty sure he'll show up. He may not see my warning as a trap, since I tried to give the impression that I was too angry with disappointment over the failure of our search to fully realize what I was saying. It seems to have gone over. Amkeddar wants me out of the way, as his attempt with Doris and the hypodermic last night shows. I know too much for his comfort, and in addition I've made myself too much of a nuisance. And after the search, he's most probably determined enough to get rid of me, to try doing it himself."

"You'll be taking an awful chance," Lorrimer pointed out. "Look—why not set a fancier trap? One in which there's greater certainty that it'll be Amkeddar and not yourself who's caught?"

"How do you mean—lay out bear traps?"

"Something of the sort. A pitfall, for example."

Melhorn leaned forward eagerly. "I know just the thing! A spring-net! With a trap like that, you have your victim physically unhurt and easy to manage. It can be rigged up with little difficulty. And the whole thing can be arranged so that the victim can approach only in one direction—directly into the snare." He launched into a further, more detailed explanation.

Corbin and Lorrimer were enthusiastic. Swift plans were made for obtaining the necessary tools and equipment and carrying out the required work. Nora Melhorn was to help by taking Doris from the house on some pretext that would keep her away for the remainder of the day. No risk could be

taken that Doris, seeing what was going on in the garden, might try to warn Amkeddar.

The blueprints of their scheme satisfactorily completed, the three men moved quickly into action.

MOONLIGHT bathed the garden like an infinitely fine luminous mist. Crickets trilled intermittently. A thin breeze made the surrounding shrubbery vocal with fretful rustlings and scratchings.

Corbin shifted restlessly on the damp grass. Uneasy thoughts kept recurring in his mind. Had he been wrong about the effect of his challenge on Amkeddar? Would the cunning Indian realize it as a trap, fail to show up? And if he did put in an appearance, would the trap work?

Corbin lay, facing the house, behind a large, semi-circular hedge situated on the side of the garden opposite the garage. The spot had been chosen carefully. It left Corbin in plain view of anyone approaching from the rear of the garden, the logical point from which an intruder would arrive who was aware that Corbin would, out of obvious necessity, be facing in the other direction, toward the house. And once sighted, the height and thickness of the hedge precluded an attack from any angle by the rear. A marauder with deadly intentions would thus be forced to walk directly into the snare arranged carefully a few yards behind Corbin.

This last consisted of a broad shallow pit covered with a net, over which lay a layer of leaves and soil had been spread. Thin cables led from the ends of the net to an anchorage near the top of a tall slender tree. More cables kept the upper half of the tree bent almost in a right angle. Anyone stepping into the net would set off a hair-trigger spring release, with the result

that the tree would whip erect, the net engulfing the victim and lifting him several feet into the air.

The unnatural position of the tree itself would not be noticed in the darkness, since other trees enclosed it on all sides, their thick foliage acting as a screen. The cables were practically invisible amid the dense shrubbery. Much exacting labor had gone into making certain that the arrangement would remain undetected until it had served its purpose.

Corbin and the others had realized early in their preparations that the net would hold a man, unaided by tools, indefinitely, but would not stand up long under the sharp talons of a tiger. Provision for this had been made in a novel way. Melhorn had rented a light, enclosed truck. If the trap were sprung, he intended to drive into the garden, directly up to the net, which, with its captive, would then be swung into the truck and released. Once its doors had been closed and locked the truck would serve excellently as a cage. The truck was concealed within the garage. Melhorn and Lorrimer sat inside it, waiting for their cue.

Knowledge that Melhorn and Lorrimer were close at hand added nothing to Corbin's peace of mind. If the trap failed, death would strike too swiftly for help to reach him in time.

CORBIN resisted the temptation to peer behind him. Even now the tiger might be crouching in the shadows at the rear of the garden, watching. The movement would warn that its arrival was expected, and consequently that a trap of some sort had been laid.

Tension mounted within Corbin as the taut, straining seconds passed. His ears were filled with the whisperings of shrubbery moving in the breeze. He listened intently, sifting the sounds.

There—what was that? A tawny form moving a branch as it slid forward? Taloned forepaws trodding dried leaves?

Time and again the muscles of his back crawled in dread expectation. But no alien sound broke the murmuring quiet. No lithe, muscular form leaped crushingly upon him.

Paradoxically, he became filled with despair. Wouldn't Amkeddar ever show up? Had he been warned somehow that a trap had been laid?

Certainty that the whole idea was futile grew within Corbin. He considered the thought of giving up, going to bed. Bed . . . sleep . . . He was tired. It had been a busy day. Weariness ached in his muscles. Rest was what he needed—rest from all the worry and all the waiting.

The grass was soft. It gave under him alluringly. No mattress had ever been as deep and inviting. A delicious numbness spread over him like a warm blanket being tucked in around him by gentle hands.

Then—a low, eager growl, the thumping of paws on turf. And swift—so swift! Sleep drained from him like water from oiled cloth. Every sense thrilling in wild alarm, he whirled to see the striped demon bounding toward him, fangs bared, yellow eyes blazing in evil triumph.

A tiger! *The tiger!*

CHAPTER XIV

Backfire

AND then—a thwanging metallic sound, a hissing like a giant's sharply indrawn breath. The onrushing form disappeared as suddenly and completely as though the very air itself had swallowed it.

There was a high-pitched snarl of

utter, dismayed surprise. The next moment an object like a huge pear swung into Corbin's line of vision. It was alive. It writhed and twisted frantically, changing shape, now elongating, now drawing itself into an irregular sphere. It emitted sounds—grunts of rage and panic. And then it was gone as it swung, pendulum-like, back out of sight. The noises it made, however, continued.

With a yell of pure joy, Corbin leaped to his feet. "We've done it! We've got him! Quick, now! Quick!"

The garage doors squealed open. A car motor roared into life. Headlight beams knifed into the darkness blindingly. Gears clashed. The headlights swung toward Corbin, came rushing over the grass.

The next few minutes were chaotic with whirlwind action. To Corbin it was as vivid as repeated flashes of lightning across a night sky, but as disjointed in sequence as a nightmare. He knew only a screaming sense of urgency, mingled impossibly with a vast thundering delight. Dimly, as though the motions were being performed by someone other than himself, he was aware of running crazily to meet the truck, of shouting directions as it maneuvered into position near the insensate thing swinging helplessly in the net and now clawing at it savagely. Then Melhorn and Lorrimer were beside him, at once elated and grim with purpose.

"I'm going to lower the net," Melhorn said. "When it's down far enough, swing it into the truck."

"And hurry!" Lorrimer urged. "The net won't hold much longer."

Corbin found himself moving again, in that sharply-defined but dream-like state. The huge pear swung suddenly before him, writhing, snarling. He heard Lorrimer speak.

"Careful! Don't get too close."

There was the rattle of a block and tackle, a thin squeaking. The pear descended, gyrating furiously as it came.

"Watch out for those claws!" Lorimer again. "Wait for its back to turn toward us. Then shove. . . . *Now!*"

Corbin was pushing, exerting his strength in feverish effort against something loathsomely warm and twisting madly under his hands.

Then:

"He's in! He's in! We've got him!"

"Throw in the lines and close the doors!" Melhorn now. "Quick—before he gets out of the net."

The cable, looping it, fumbling it, almost dropped it and having to start over. Then throwing it into the dark square mouth, hideously vocal. The slam of stout metal doors, the sharp clicking of a lock.

Over. Finished.

CORBIN leaned against the truck in abrupt limpness. They had done it. Full realization of the accomplishment struck into him stunningly.

Amkeddar was caught!

Back at the house, lights blazed suddenly. Within seconds, two figures appeared on the terrace. Descending to the lawn, they began to run toward the truck. They were Nora Melhorn and the butler, Corbin saw presently. The noises attending Amkeddar's capture had evidently aroused them.

Corbin glanced at the windows of Doris' room. Light glowed behind them. As he watched, they swung open and the slim figure of the girl appeared on the terrace, to stand, gazing curiously toward the group in the garden.

"For pity's sake, what is this all about?" Nora Melhorn demanded as she hurried up.

"Indeed, sir," the butler told Mel-

horn, "I thought a riot of some sort was in progress."

"Nothing to be alarmed about," Melhorn said. "We've merely been . . . uhm . . . catching rats. Yes—catching rats."

"A likely explanation!" Nora Melhorn pursed her lips and donned the expression of a woman who senses that there are secrets from which she is being excluded. She gazed in narrow-eyed interest at the truck, but it was quiet now, revealing no clue to what was locked inside.

Melhorn patted her spare shoulder. "Everything is all right, Nora. We'll explain later. For the present we're going to be very busy. Now go back into the house. And don't worry."

"Stay with Doris," Corbin added with soft insistence. "Keep her in her room. Don't let her out of your sight for any reason."

Partial understanding of the situation dawned in Nora Melhorn's eyes. She nodded quickly and turned to hurry back to the house.

The butler said eagerly, "If I may be of service, sir . . ."

"We have everything under control, Wallace," Melhorn responded. "You can go back to bed."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." Face clouding with disappointment, the butler started away.

Quiet fell. From within the truck came sounds of soft movement, stealthy, questing.

Corbin glanced at Doris' windows again. Silhouetted in their light, he saw Nora Melhorn leading the girl inside. Lips tightening purposefully, he turned to the truck.

"Amkeddar!" he called softly. "Can you hear me?"

"Quite well, Mr. Corbin," the muffled answer came.

"We've got you—you know that."

"But not for long, Mr. Corbin."

"Long enough to accomplish what we want."

"And what might that be?"

"To free Doris from your control. Restore her completely to normal, and we'll let you go. Refuse, and we turn you over to the police."

A DERISIVE chuckle issued from within the truck. "You would hardly do that, Mr. Corbin. After that little search party fiasco of yours this afternoon, the police are definitely on my side of the fence. Turn me over to them, and I'll charge you with kidnaping. And if you kill me or keep me prisoner, Doris remains in my power." The chuckle sounded again. "You are in no position to bargain, Mr. Corbin. If we do anything at all, it will be on my terms."

Corbin snapped, "You're overlooking something, Amkeddar—Kumara!"

Abrupt, utter silence.

"So she's still alive!" Corbin said triumphantly. "You still have her!"

"No—I've had her taken away. You'll never find her!"

"Too late, Amkeddar. You gave yourself away. She's still at your estate—and you know it! All right—now we bargain on my terms. Free Doris, and we let you go. Refuse, and I'll go and get Kumara and take her to the police. Not Rydell, but higher authorities, far more intelligent and efficient. You know what that will mean. Kumara knows plenty about your activities, and after trying to murder her, she won't hesitate to tell everything. You've probably broken enough laws to get a life sentence—or worse."

Amkeddar's voice grated like a file on steel. "Don't do anything you'll be sorry for, Mr. Corbin!"

"You refuse?"

Silence.

Melhorn drew Corbin aside. Lorrimer joined them, holding a rifle which he had obtained a short time previously from the driving compartment of the truck.

"He's forcing our hand, Jeff," Melhorn whispered.

Corbin nodded bleakly. "Everything hinges on Kumara. He has her under guard, but evidently isn't too sure that we couldn't get her away. He's simply giving himself the benefit of the doubt. He knows that taking Doris out of his power is our primary objective, and that if we do get Kumara we'll bring her here to force him before contacting the police. Once we do that, he'll give in."

"Which means," Melhorn said, "that you'll have to run the risk of taking Kumara from Amkeddar's guards."

Corbin shrugged. "Nothing else to do."

"Then I'm going along. You'll need help. George, here, will watch the truck."

Corbin hesitated a moment, finally agreed. "We start at once. Amkeddar's men may get worried about his failure to return and be on the alert for trouble." He started toward his roadster, parked in front of the house.

CORBIN and Melhorn crept through the shadowy, weed-grown field, converging upon the vine-covered wall ahead. They had left the roadster a safe distance down the road, to avoid having the sound of the motor alert the guards within the estate. Both gripped revolvers, which had been obtained earlier in the day.

Reaching the wall, Corbin made a stirrup of his hands, indicating in pantomime that Melhorn was to mount this way to the top. He wished to take no chance that Melhorn might slip in climbing the vines. When Melhorn

had gained the crest of the wall, Corbin joined him, moving swiftly but carefully. He paused a moment, surveying the inclosure with intently narrowed eyes. Light streamed through the partially opened door of the laboratory building, but no sound or movement broke the stillness of the scene.

Finally Corbin slipped to the ground. He helped Melhorn down beside him, listened a moment, then started toward the gate.

One of Amkeddar's Indian servants was on guard there. He had slumped down against the wall at one side and was dozing—a fact which proved unfortunate for him. Taking due allowance for the turban which the man wore, Corbin clubbed him into further unconsciousness with the butt of his revolver. Then, gesturing to Melhorn, he turned toward the laboratory.

Peering cautiously through the opening in the door, Corbin saw that there were two persons inside. One was Kumara, huddled forlornly in a cage. The other was an Indian, whom Corbin recognized as Chondhas. Corbin smiled grimly. He had a score to settle with the man.

He thought swiftly. Chondhas held a rifle. He could cover the Indian before he could use it, but no chance could be taken that Chondhas might try to shout an alarm. Corbin had already had a sample of the Indian's tricks.

Corbin decided to use a trick of his own. Softly and indistinctly, he called, "Chondhas!"

The Indian started to his feet, gazing toward the door. He voiced a question in his own language, hesitating.

Corbin repeated his call, making it more demanding. Chondhas paused a moment longer, shrugged, and started for the door. Corbin moved to one side of the opening. As the Indian

swung the door wider and stepped outside, Corbin hit him. He used his fist this time, aiming for the point of the Indian's jaw. Chondhas dropped as though he had been struck by a pile-driver.

"That makes us even," Corbin muttered, rubbing his bruised knuckles. He gestured to Melhorn and strode into the laboratory.

Kumara stared in wide-eyed incredulity as they appeared. "You!" she gasped. "But how—?"

"How isn't important," Corbin said, examining the cage. "We're here."

"What do you want?" A dim hope struggled in the Indian girl's face.

CORBIN gave a quick nod of assurance. "We came to get you out of here. Where's the key to this lock?"

"It's in a drawer, there." Kumara pointed eagerly to a table near Corbin.

The key was one of a dozen or so, fastened to a ring. Several had to be tried before the one which opened the cage lock was discovered.

Aided by Corbin, Kumara climbed stiffly from the cage and stood erect. "Free!" she exulted. "Free! It seems too good to be true. I had given up hope long ago." Abruptly she gripped Corbin's arm. "But how were you able to reach me? Where is Amkeddar?"

Rapidly Corbin explained, revealing his capture of Amkeddar. He went on to tell of his efforts to release Doris from Amkeddar's control, describing the part Kumara could play in bringing about complete victory. He finished:

"I know you probably blame Doris for everything that happened, but you must realize by now that it isn't her fault. Amkeddar's the one who's responsible. In return for your own freedom, then, will you help us to win freedom for Doris?"

"Gladly!" Kumara responded. "I'll

even do more. I'll show you a way to do it yourself."

"You can!" Eagerness and disbelief mingled in Corbin's involuntary exclamation. "But how?"

"It is done by means of a potion, which, given to a subject, destroys the will. You have only to state the nature of the change in the subject's mind that you desire, and it is at once accomplished. Hypnotism isn't necessary. Amkeddar uses it only to obtain special effects. Thus if you wish to return your Doris to normal, you have only to administer the potion and command that it be done. The potion leaves the body soon after, restoring the will, but the change in mind remains. It is all fiendishly clever, as you can easily see. Given the potion and told that such and such a thing is so, a subject continues to believe it even after the return of his will, and does, in fact, use his will to fight all efforts to make him believe that it is not so."

"Just the thing!" Corbin whispered delightedly. He caught Kumara's shoulders. "Do you know where I can find some of this potion?"

SHE nodded her glistening black head.

"I do—but it is locked away. Obtaining it would take time. And time is precious. Amkeddar must be placed in the hands of the police as quickly as possible. The man is a devil. Don't be too sure that he will remain in your power indefinitely."

Reluctantly, Corbin agreed. "We'll leave at once, then."

"First I must find the amulet," Kumara said. "It can be used as a weapon against Amkeddar should anything go wrong."

Corbin was puzzled. "The amulet?"

"You noticed the large gold ring, bearing the head of a tiger, which Amkeddar wears?"

"Why—yes."

"That is the amulet. Amkeddar has injected himself so often with the elixir of change, that it is only through the power of the amulet that he can retain human form. When he adopts tiger form, the amulet naturally must be left behind."

Corbin nodded understandingly, but the information left him dazed. Unorthodox science, or black magic—which was the true answer to Amkeddar's weird practices? Corbin wasn't certain. He knew only that, after the incredible events of the past several days, anything might be possible.

Kumara spoke again, her voice quickening. "The amulet most likely will be at the house, in Amkeddar's room. I will go alone. The two others of Amkeddar's men, off duty now, are asleep there. If I go alone, there will be less possibility of waking them."

"All right," Corbin agreed. "But hurry."

"I must have the keys you took from the drawer. They will enable me to enter any part of the house."

Corbin had unconsciously been holding the key-laden ring. Reminded of it, he turned it over to Kumara, and she hastened from the room.

Alone with Corbin, Melhorn released a deep sigh. "Almost over, Jeff. It's hard to believe. Soon the whole affair will seem just a bad dream."

"I hope so," Corbin said. "But I'm afraid there are things I'll never forget . . . things that will always haunt me."

They fell silent, waiting, while the leaden minutes crept past. Then, with a soft rustle of sound, Kumara stepped into the room. Her face was triumphant.

"I have it," she announced. "Come, now, let us go."

Wild elation surging through him, Corbin led Melhorn and the girl in an

eager dash from the building. Down the gravel driveway, they raced, toward the gate.

CORBIN knew the gate was locked, but the guard he had slugged would have the key. Reaching the spot where he had left the guard, he received his first hint of what seemed to be impending disaster.

The man was gone.

There was an abrupt rustle of shrubbery from behind. In unison with Melhorn and Kumara, Corbin whirled around, all of his senses keening in dismay.

Covering them with a rifle, stood a naked apparition. It was Amkeddar, features twisted in a demoniac grin. Two figures accompanied him. One was the guard, restored to consciousness, holding a rifle also. The other was—Doris. She clutched a coat about her, evidently belonging to the guard. Corbin realized in a far corner of his mind that it must have been as tigers that Doris and Amkeddar had arrived on the scene.

"Drop your guns!" Amkeddar commanded Corbin and Melhorn. "Hesitate for just so much as an instant, and I shoot."

There was nothing else to do. To resist would be to commit useless suicide. Corbin released his grip on the revolver, heard it join Melhorn's in a fall to the ground.

Amkeddar walked toward Corbin slowly, eyes blazing, lips writhing back from his teeth. His voice was low, quivering with hate. "We settle accounts once and for all, Mr. Corbin. But first a little reward for your cleverness tonight." Without warning, he swung the barrel of the rifle against the side of Corbin's head.

Awareness left Corbin in a flash of intolerable brilliance.

CHAPTER XV

Dr. Amkeddar Plays Host

DARKNESS, in him and around him, vast and complete. Then a vague sensation of shock. The darkness brightened. He became aware of pain, repeated, insistent. A dull anger surging through him, he opened his eyes.

The first person he saw was Amkeddar, garbed now in a white laboratory smock. Corbin realized that the other had been bending over him, apparently having been working to restore him to consciousness. Now, with a nod of satisfaction, the Indian straightened.

"Delighted to find you awake at last, Mr. Corbin. You were delaying festivities."

"I'll do more than that if—" Corbin abruptly broke off. In attempting to move his arms, he discovered they had been bound tightly behind his back. Other discoveries came. He was wet, drenched. Water, it seemed, had been poured over him to bring him awake. And his cheeks burned from numerous stinging slaps.

He was in the laboratory, he saw, lying against one wall. Near him stood Kumara and Melhorn, their faces drawn and pale. The arms of the pair had also been bound. Then he saw Doris at one end of the room. She wore a laboratory smock, too, her face indifferent and remote. Amkeddar's four Indian henchmen moved about amid noises of activity, engaged in tasks Corbin didn't try to identify at once.

The laboratory had undergone a change. It was this that explained the industry of the four Indians. The cages, tables, and cabinets had been placed around the walls, leaving the middle of the room bare. At present the Indians

were occupied in setting up certain of the ceremonial fixtures Corbin had seen before. The throne-like chairs rose at one end of the cleared space. Around the edges were the braziers on their tripod supports. They were being lighted.

There was something definitely ominous about the proceedings. Corbin felt a coldness creep through him.

Amkeddar's voice sounded, amused and mocking. "I hope you find the preparations interesting, Mr. Corbin."

"You devil!" Corbin gritted. "What are you up to?"

"You will see soon enough."

"How did you get out of the truck?"

"I summoned Doris to release me. The other woman had fallen asleep. Doris had no difficulty in leaving the house." Amkeddar chuckled gloatingly. "Leaving Doris so feebly guarded was a clumsy oversight on your part, Mr. Corbin. And very fortunate for me, I might add."

"But what about Lorrimer?" Corbin demanded in sudden anxiety. "What happened to him?"

"He is no longer alive, I am sorry to say. Doris struck him with a rock—a bit too enthusiastically. But it might comfort you to know that Lorrimer died without pain. He never knew what hit him. There was no warning, since I contacted Doris through my power over her mind."

LORRIMER dead! Doris his murderess! In an abrupt frenzy of rage and grief, Corbin threw himself against his bonds. But he had been tied carefully and securely. At last he gave up, panting. He felt blood trickle along his flesh where the skin had broken.

With a derisive laugh, Amkeddar turned away. He issued curt instructions to the four Indians, who had now finished their work. Two of them hauled Corbin roughly to his feet. The remain-

ing two devoted their attentions to Melhorn, dragging him into the center of the room. Kumara was left unmolested. For some strange reason, she did not move from her position against the wall. Her features had a fixed, intent look.

Amkeddar busied himself for a moment at one of the tables. Then he returned to Corbin. In one lean dark hand he held a hypodermic syringe, filled with amber fluid.

Sight of the needle galvanized Corbin into another burst of furious effort. It availed him nothing. With his arms bound and an Indian gripping him at each side, he was helpless.

"Such exuberance!" Amkeddar jeered. "I shall most certainly see that it has a more worthwhile outlet." He gestured insinuatingly with the hypodermic. "Perhaps you would be interested in my plan? Using the will-destroyer, I intend first to put you under my control—something which Doris unfortunately failed to do the other day. Then I will . . . ah . . . arrange to have you change form. In this form, you will be of great service to me by disposing of Mr. Melhorn."

"You must be completely insane!" Corbin gasped. "You can't hope to get away with anything like that!"

"I do not hope, Mr. Corbin. I am positive that I will. After Mr. Melhorn has been taken care of, I will have the pleasure of dealing with you in an identical manner. My story to Rydell will be that you and Mr. Melhorn trespassed upon my estate and happened to be killed by one of the tigers which I keep for experimental purposes and which, through carelessness on the part of one of my servants, happened to escape from its cage. That tiger will be Kumara—slain in righteous indignation for her lack of manners toward my guests, even though they happened to be uninvited ones. As for Lorrimer, I

intend later to return for him, load him into the truck, and drive it into a tree somewhere down the road. A regrettable accident, which will very nicely account for Lorrimer's broken head. And when all is finally over, I will have Doris as a charming companion for as long as I shall be interested in her."

CORBIN sagged in despair. The scheme was diabolically clever. With various minor details taken care of, which Amkeddar in his broad outline had not mentioned, Corbin had little doubt but that it would succeed. As he thought of the role he was shortly to be forced to play, his mind rebelled in utter horror.

Amkeddar snapped out an abrupt command. The two Indians holding Corbin tightened their grips, keeping him pinned helplessly between them. Stepping forward, Amkeddar sank the hypodermic needle into Corbin's arm and pressed the plunger down as far as it would go. The whole action was accomplished before Corbin could gather himself for an effort at resistance.

In another moment, Amkeddar stepped back, grinning in satisfaction. "The dose I have just given you, Mr. Corbin, is a dozen times stronger than that which I gave Doris at Mrs. Castleton's party last week. You will feel its effects soon. The will-destroyer can be given either orally or intravenously. The intravenous method works somewhat faster, however, and is the most convenient for use on unwilling subjects."

In Corbin's mind began the impulse which would send him into a last struggle of outrage and despair. But the action was never completed. A strange feeling of indifference swept suddenly over him, quenching his intention as water quenches fire. The plan remained, but he no longer possessed the determi-

nation to carry it out. His will had gone. With it went his awareness of ego, of self. His thoughts became impersonal, detached. Nothing which had once seemed desirable and important to him mattered any more.

Amkeddar had been watching hawkishly. Now, with an eager, sadistic smile, he spoke.

"How do you feel, Mr. Corbin?"

"I feel . . . different."

"You are prepared to carry out fully and completely my slightest wish?"

Corbin nodded like an automaton. "Your slightest wish."

"Fine!" Amkeddar moved back to the table where he had obtained the hypodermic syringe. He selected another, filled this time with a greenish-black, oil looking fluid. At his command, Corbin offered his arm obediently. The needle sank into a vein, the plunger was pressed home.

SLOWLY, but with gathering speed, a sensation of dizziness rushed over Corbin. His blood roared deafeningly in his head. The room seemed to whirl crazily around him. He dropped to the floor, not all at once, but bending first to hands and knees. He had a vague, dim knowledge of pain. Giant hands seemed to be kneading his body, pulling and pressing at it as though it were clay.

Then the pain was gone, the dizziness was gone. The room steadied, came back into focus. Its outlines sharpened with crystal clarity.

Corbin stretched. He felt the muscles ripple along his new body. He was conscious of a boundless vitality, a savage, surging strength. Sounds came to him with a distinctness he had never known before. And he became aware of a host of fascinating odors and scents which previously he had never imagined existed.

Leaving nothing to chance, Amkeddar pulled an automatic from one pocket of his smock and watched narrowly. Corbin shifted in growing restlessness, but made no move to attack. At last, with a nod of satisfaction, Amkeddar turned to Melhorn, still held in the center of the room. He said tauntingly:

"Forgive me for having neglected you, Mr. Melhorn. My breach of manners, however, will soon be remedied."

Melhorn said nothing. He stared at Corbin, a sick horror naked in his eyes. His features were gray, sunken.

Amkeddar snapped orders. Melhorn was released, the ropes keeping his hands confined behind his back untied. Hopelessness showed in the sagging of Melhorn's shoulders as he glanced at the door. It had been closed and locked. There was to be no slightest opportunity of escape.

Again Amkeddar snapped orders. The four Indians moved in a group to one side of the room. Gesturing to Doris, Amkeddar seated himself in one of the throne-like chairs, the girl taking the other. Drums boomed suddenly. The wailing of flutes rose. A barbaric rhythm shaped itself, quickened in tempo. Throbbing, ululating, it swelled in volume, filling the room. Still it quickened, growing wild and intoxicating. And it began to call, at once pleading and demanding.

CORBIN heard the call. In a dim way, he remembered having heard it before. But now, with his will broken down, it was overpowering in its compelling insistence. He could no longer resist doing what it urged—to seek and kill, to slash and tear in a red orgy of madness.

His eyes settled on Melhorn. He felt a hot wave of eagerness, torturing in its intensity. His muscles quivered with impulses he could barely restrain.

The music, compelling, irresistible. Melhorn, warm and alive, flesh and blood.

He had to kill! *He had to kill!* He couldn't wait any longer. He couldn't control himself any longer.

He glanced pleadingly at Amkeddar. Stridently, gloatingly, the Indian laughed. He nodded. He pointed at Melhorn.

"Kill!"

With a growl of delight, Corbin padded toward his helpless victim, crouched to spring.

CHAPTER XVI

Battle of Tigers

OVER the throbbing of the drums and the wailing of the flutes came a shout.

"Stop!"

Startled silence dropped over the room like a muffling blanket. All eyes turned to the figure who had spoken.

It was Kumara. She stood near one of the flaming braziers at the edge of the cleared space. Her arms were free. Blood covered her wrists and hands like glistening red gloves, mute testimony of the supreme effort it had taken her to fight loose of her ropes.

She looked at Amkeddar and smiled. It was a quiet, somehow terrible smile. Then she reached into her dress. From some hiding place within it, she produced a small object that gleamed a dull yellow. She raised it high.

Amkeddar's face twisted abruptly into a mask of horror. He shot to his feet. He gasped incredulously:

"The amulet! You . . . you have the amulet!"

Kumara's laughter trilled, cold and harsh. "Yes, oh lord and master, I have the amulet. It is only through the power of the amulet that you can now retain

human shape. And that power is destroyed if the amulet touches fire! For your treachery and lack of faith, touch fire it shall!"

"No!" Amkeddar shrieked. "Don't — don't! I promise anything!"

Kumara's smile only grew more terrible. Amkeddar started toward her, then stopped, apparently realizing he could never reach her in time to prevent the amulet from being dropped into the blazing coals within the brazier. He spread his hands imploringly.

"Please, Kumara — anything! I promise you anything! I will release these people. I will give up my plans. You and I will leave here together, to take up our old life. Look, Kumara." Amkeddar reached into his smock, as though to produce something which would be incontrovertible evidence of his sincerity. In a blur of incredibly swift movement, he whipped out the automatic and fired, pressing the trigger repeatedly so that the roars of each shot seemed to blend as one.

But with a rapidity that almost but not quite matched Amkeddar's, Kumara had moved also. Only two of the bullets reached her. And before they did, she had dropped the golden tiger-head ring into the brazier.

INTERSE, vast silence followed Amkeddar's barrage. For an instant the occupants of the room stood frozen in motion, as though the air had turned to ice of incomparable clarity.

Then Kumara's hands went slowly to the front of her dress where now, below the heart, two crimson spots appeared and began to spread. She swayed. Her lips parted grimacingly for a laugh that issued instead as a sob.

Amkeddar stood rigidly, eyes closed, the lines of his face writhing in pain. A moment longer he stood thus. Then he dropped to hands and knees. The

outlines of his body shimmered weirdly, flowed like molten glass. Colors blurred, ran together, changed. Presently came solidity, permanence. The transformation was over.

The tiger that was Amkeddar stepped from the limp folds of the laboratory smock.

Since Kumara's shouted order to stop, Corbin had not moved from his crouching position on the floor. There had been no counter-order. And no longer possessing any volition of his own, he could do nothing until commanded to do it.

Now he heard a growl. With detached interest, he saw Amkeddar tensing for a leap at Kumara.

Desperately summoning what remained of her ebbing strength, the Indian girl released a cry.

"Corbin! Amkeddar is your enemy. Fight him! Kill him!"

The will-destroyer had not yet left Corbin's system. He was still pliable, open to suggestion.

At Kumara's exhortation, purpose flowed into him. He had been given directions. He would obey.

Fight Amkeddar! Kill Amkeddar!

He flexed his powerful tiger's muscles. He snarled a challenge.

Amkeddar had frozen in dismay. Corbin as a source of danger had been overlooked. Reminded of Corbin now, warned of immediately impending attack, Amkeddar whirled to the defensive. Thwarted fury, a consuming, insensate hatred, flamed into his eyes.

Across a space of several yards, the two measured each other, fangs bared, muscles gathered with straining tautness. Then, almost in unison, they sprang to join in battle.

They met in mid-air, striking chest to chest with a jolting impact. Taloned forepaws locking one to the other, they fell in a writhing tangle to the floor.

They wrestled for an advantage, rolling over and over, tawny bodies threshing and heaving. Each sought for a death-grip on the throat of his adversary, while fighting savagely to protect himself from a corresponding attack. Back and forth, the battle raged, indescribably swift and violent.

Once they broke free. They circled each other for a moment, taking stock of damage inflicted, watching for any slightest relaxing of guard. Then, again, they crashed together in conflict.

Back and forth . . . rolling over and over . . . threshing and writhing . . . biting and clawing. . . .

AS THE battle progressed, Amkeddar's efforts grew more rational, planned, and deliberate. It was a duel from which only one would emerge alive. Amkeddar seemed to have realized that continuing it in blind, unreasoning fury was nothing more or less than suicidal. He began to fight with the stealthy cunning typical of him.

In a crafty maneuver, he allowed Corbin to swarm atop him, pinning his back to the floor. Then, with the claws of one hindleg, he struck at Corbin in a fierce effort at disembowelment. At the crucial instant, however, Corbin accidentally slipped. The slashing claws merely grazed his flank.

Again Amkeddar got Corbin into a position where he could bring his deadly trick into play. But the repetition warned Corbin. Frantically, he rolled away—not a split-second too soon, for the other's razor-sharp talons painfully raked his side.

Now cautiousness settled over Corbin. Realization came that it was cleverness as much as swiftness and strength that would win. He fought carefully, refusing to be taken in by Amkeddar's deceptions.

The struggle resolved itself into a

duelling match in which the weapons were scythe-like claws backed by powerful tendons and driven by lightning-fast reflexes. The two combatants circled each other, darting in, dodging back, feinting, parrying, thrusting with blurred rapidity. Occasionally they grappled, but each time they quickly broke apart. Neither wished to risk being drawn into a trap.

Feint, thrust, parry . . . feint, thrust, parry . . . around and around. . . .

And then Corbin became aware of a growing weariness. He could no longer move as quickly as before. He found that it was becoming strangely difficult for him to breathe. His lungs began laboring.

Amkeddar sensed that his opponent was weakening. He renewed his assaults with increasing vigor.

Corbin gave ground. A mistiness was growing before his eyes. Blood began pounding in his head. He felt a mounting dizziness that seemed oddly familiar.

With shock of horror, he realized suddenly what was wrong. Amkeddar had given him just enough of the elixir of change to accomplish, in tiger form, the murder of Melhorn. The time limit involved had more than been covered by the length of the battle. Corbin was changing back into human shape!

The realization dawned upon Amkeddar also. With a snarl of eagerness and anticipated triumph, he abandoned further caution and closed in for the kill.

DESPERATION brought a cold, nerveless clarity to Corbin. Only a trick would win now, he knew. If it failed, he was doomed.

Gathering his last reserves of strength, Corbin turned and ran. Amkeddar bounded in pursuit, eyes flaming with hungry malevolence.

A wall brought Corbin up short. He

cowered against it, head drooping, panting laboriously. He seemed too weak to move. All fight, all spirit, seemed to have left him.

Gauging the distance between them, Amkeddar leaped in for the finish. Corbin darted aside at the last moment. Amkeddar hit the wall hard. It stunned him for the precious instant Corbin needed. Before Amkeddar could recover and put up a defense, Corbin pounced upon him. Throwing his fast dwindling supply of strength into one final, titanic effort, Corbin closed his terrible tiger's jaws on Amkeddar's throat—ripped . . . tore.

Again.

And again.

Finally Corbin released the limp, blood-covered bundle of fur that had been Amkeddar. He slumped to the floor. A roaring filled his ears. The room gyrated madly before his eyes. The world rocked and spun beneath him. Then there was only a vast blackness. Exhaustion and the after-effects of the drugs with which he had been injected, had taken their toll.

And as he lay in stupor, Corbin, began to change.

Chondhas had been waiting for that. He gripped his rifle more tightly. His dark features were anxious. While the battle raged, he had not been able to tell which of the two tigers was which. He had been forced to wait for the outcome. Now, as Corbin's change reached its weird climax, dismay and then rage contorted Chondhas' face. His eyes flashed vindictively at the slayer of his chief. He threw the rifle to his shoulder, aimed it.

Chondhas' three companions watched impassively. Melhorn, who had joined Kumara in an attempt to tend her wounds, cried out in horror. He started forward. The fact that he would not be able to reach Chondhas in time to

prevent him from killing Corbin was appallingly obvious.

The imperative pounding of knuckles against the door struck like thunder into the tense silence.

"Open up!" a voice outside shouted. "This is the police!"

SLOWLY Corbin became aware of sunlight beating against his closed eyes. He opened them. He stared puzzledly. The laboratory was gone. The room in which he found himself was entirely different. But curiously familiar. Realization finally came that he was in his room, in Melhorn's home.

He stiffened as a chilling thought struck him. He whipped his hands from beneath the covers of the bed on which he lay and peered at them in apprehension. He sighed in relief. Human hands. Not taloned paws.

A soft chuckle abruptly sounded. "Awake, eh?"

Startled, Corbin twisted around. Melhorn stood at the other side of the bed, lips stretched in a broad grin. Beside him was—

Corbin gasped incredulously. It was impossible! He must be dreaming!

"I'm alive, all right," Lorrimer reassured. He fingered his bandaged head. "It was a close call, though. Doris swings a mean rock."

"I never was so glad to see anybody in all my life!" Corbin exclaimed. "Amkeddar told me you were dead—that Doris had killed you."

"Can't say she didn't try," Lorrimer responded with a grimace. "Luckily, I've got a thick skull and enough hair for a cushion. I wasn't completely out the first time she hit me. After she released Amkeddar from the truck, she bopped me several more times on his directions. That must have convinced Amkeddar I was done for. Even so, I wasn't unconscious long. When I woke

up, I went straight to the police. Not Rydell, but state police. I knew Amkeddar would go after you first thing, to stop you from getting Kumara."

Melhorn put in, "George and the police reached Amkeddar's estate in the nick of time. You had passed out from the fight, Jeff, and were beginning to . . . change. One of Amkeddar's servants—the fellow called Chondhas—was just about to shoot you. The arrival of the police changed his mind. He and the others now are where they can no longer do any harm."

"I imagine you had a difficult time explaining things to the police," Corbin said.

"Not too difficult. I simply told the truth of all that happened. Kumara bore me out, and the four Indians talked plenty once they got started. Whether or not the police completely believed everything is doubtful, but they agreed the whole affair is one that should be hushed up. Amkeddar has officially been charged with Kumara's murder. His disappearance will be explained as that he's hiding from the law. Nothing will be said about anything else. As for the dead tiger, it's just an animal after all. And a dead animal doesn't concern the police."

Corbin said softly, "Then Kumara is . . . dead?"

MELHORN nodded gravely. "But she lived long enough to clear up several things. Amkeddar's cult was a revival of an ancient Indian secret society. Originally, this practiced a fantastic sort of devil worship, in which the tiger was regarded as an incarnation of Satan. The whole idea was tied in with sorcery of the blackest kind. As a mark of special devotion, the society's members had the ability to assume the physical and mental attributes of their evil patron. It was accom-

plished by magical elixirs and potions, the formulas for which, as Kumara seemed strongly to hint, were given the members by none other than Satan himself.

"If so, Satan evidently had plenty of strings attached to his gift. Too frequent use of the change elixir made it impossible to retain human shape. One dose seems to have lasted for some time, and while it did, the member could change shape at will. But the doses had to be repeated—and that's where the catch came in. To get around the elixir's chief drawback, the members were given a magic amulet in the form of a ring, which imparted the power to retain human form indefinitely. If the amulet happened to touch fire, however, this power was lost. The basic idea is frightfully logical, considering that tigers fear fire above anything else, and that Satan and fire are practically synonymous. In this way, apparently, Satan had an effective means of keeping the members in line." Melhorn smiled in wry humor.

"Here I am, discussing the most incredible things as though they were as real and commonplace as penicillin or radar. Science would say that an elixir capable of altering human shape was impossible—just a lot of superstitious nonsense. More direct-minded persons would simply call the nearest booby-hatch."

"We're convinced, anyway," Corbin pointed out. "And after what I went through, I'm ready and willing to believe anything. But how did Amkeddar happen to get hold of the change elixir and the other things?"

"According to Kumara," Melhorn went on, "Amkeddar obtained the amulet and the formulas for the various magical drugs from records dating back to the original cult, which had come into his possession through a legacy.

Most likely they had been in his family for generations, having been handed down from some ancestor who was a member of the cult. Amkeddar realized the elixirs would bring power and profit if used in the right way. And he was ruthless and ambitious enough not to hesitate.

"He opened a cult in India, but was forced to abandon it when one of the members got out of hand and killed an important government official. An investigation followed which would have landed Amkeddar in prison. But he escaped to America, gaining entry by means of forged and stolen papers. He represented himself as an Indian scientist specializing in glandular research, who had arrived to study American techniques. It wasn't difficult at all. He'd actually had scientific training, it seems.

"Amkeddar settled in Sylvan Heights for obvious reasons. It was small and remote, inhabited by people wealthy enough to make just the right kind of converts. From what Kumara told me, however, Amkeddar's purpose wasn't money alone. It was power, too. The will-destroying potion gave him absolute control over the minds and lives of his disciples. Those in Sylvan Heights were to serve merely as stepping stones to persons in control of the country's economic and political structure. Amkeddar thus intended to become a sort of Svengali, with America, and ultimately the world, playing Trilby. Impossible? But with the will-destroyer, who knows how far he might have gone, if he hadn't been stopped in time?"

THERE was a silence. Finally Corbin said:

"And Doris? How is she?"

"She's been asking about you," Melhorn answered with a grin. "Kumara told me where to find a supply of the

will-destroying potion, and it proved completely satisfactory. Working together, George and I brought Doris back to normal. She doesn't remember anything that happened."

"Later, we'll restore the other people Amkeddar got his hooks into," Lorrimer put in. "There's enough of the potion to go around. After that, the formulas go into the nearest furnace. The world can do very well without them. As for the possibility that some persons might have taken the change elixir too often, there's no danger. Amkeddar wasn't operating in Sylvan Heights long enough, and as final proof, there's the fact that no other amulet but his was ever in evidence."

"We have a lot to thank Kumara for," Corbin said, his voice gentle in tribute.

Melhorn nodded solemnly. "She made everything possible. But she wouldn't have cared to live. She loved Amkeddar, you know. He was thoroughly rotten, but she didn't see it that way until the end. He'd insisted that the cult and his use of the formulas was only a means of making enough money to settle on. Harmless enough. The cultists were having a killing good time, and could afford the high price."

There was a knock at the door. A soft voice asked:

"Is Jeff awake yet?"

"He, certainly is!" Melhorn called back. "Come and get him!"

Doris rushed into the room.

Melhorn nudged Lorrimer's arm. "We might as well go down to the library. I have a bottle of rye that's begging to be emptied. As for Jeff, it seems that he's already well plastered."

"But lipstick isn't intoxicating, Barton," Lorrimer pointed out as he fell in step toward the door.

Melhorn smiled pityingly. "Then you've never tried it, George."

ROMANCE of the ELEMENTS

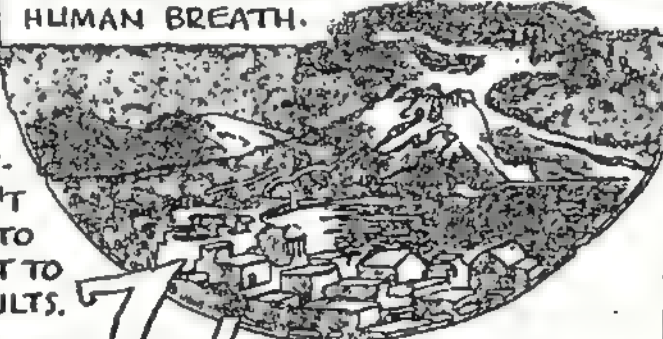
UNTIL LATE IN THE 1700'S, EUROPEAN MINERALOGISTS BELIEVED THAT THE TELLURIDES FOUND ASSOCIATED WITH GOLD IN TRANSYLVANIA SAND-STONES WERE MERELY BISMUTH OR ANTIMONY ALLOYS. THESE ORES—SOMETIMES CALLED WEISSGOLDERZ—WERE CONSIDERED A NUISANCE BECAUSE THEY WOULDN'T READILY GIVE UP THE GOLD THEY WERE COMBINED WITH.



WALF AS ABUNDANT AS GOLD, TELLURIUM HAS BEEN FOUND IN SMALL QUANTITIES OVER A WIDE AREA. IN THE ASHES OF MT. VESUVIUS, FOR INSTANCE; IN THE BISMUTH OF BOLIVIA; IN THE CHAMBER MUD OF THE SULPHURIC ACID WORKS AT OSAKA, JAPAN. TELLURIUM IMPARTS A GARLIC ODOR TO HUMAN BREATH.



MUELLER VON RIECHENSTEIN THOUGHT HE'D DISCOVERED A NEW ELEMENT WHILE WORKING WITH SOME WEISSGOLDERZ IN 1782. BUT HE WASN'T SURE. SO HE SENT A SAMPLE TO TOBERN BERGMANN WHO SUBJECTED IT TO HIS BLOWPIPE WITHOUT CONCLUSIVE RESULTS.



17 YEARS LATER KLAPROTH ISOLATED THE ELEMENT, MADE KNOWN ITS PROPERTIES BEFORE THE BERLIN ACADEMY, AND CREDITED MUELLER WITH THE ORIGINAL DISCOVERY. THIS STARTED A CONTROVERSY WITH KITAIBEL, GERMAN SCIENTIST, WHO, IGNORANT OF MUELLER'S WORK, HAD HIMSELF INVESTIGATED THE SUBSTANCE IN 1789.

Today TELLURIUM IS VALUABLE. MINUTE QUANTITIES, ADDED TO CAST IRON, INCREASE THE DEPTH OF CHILL AND MAKE CASTINGS MORE ABRASIVE.—RESISTANT. A PIPE MADE OF LEAD-TELLURIUM IS ACTUALLY LESS LIKELY TO BURST WHEN ITS WALL-THICKNESS IS REDUCED ONE THIRD BY STRETCHING AND ELONGATING.



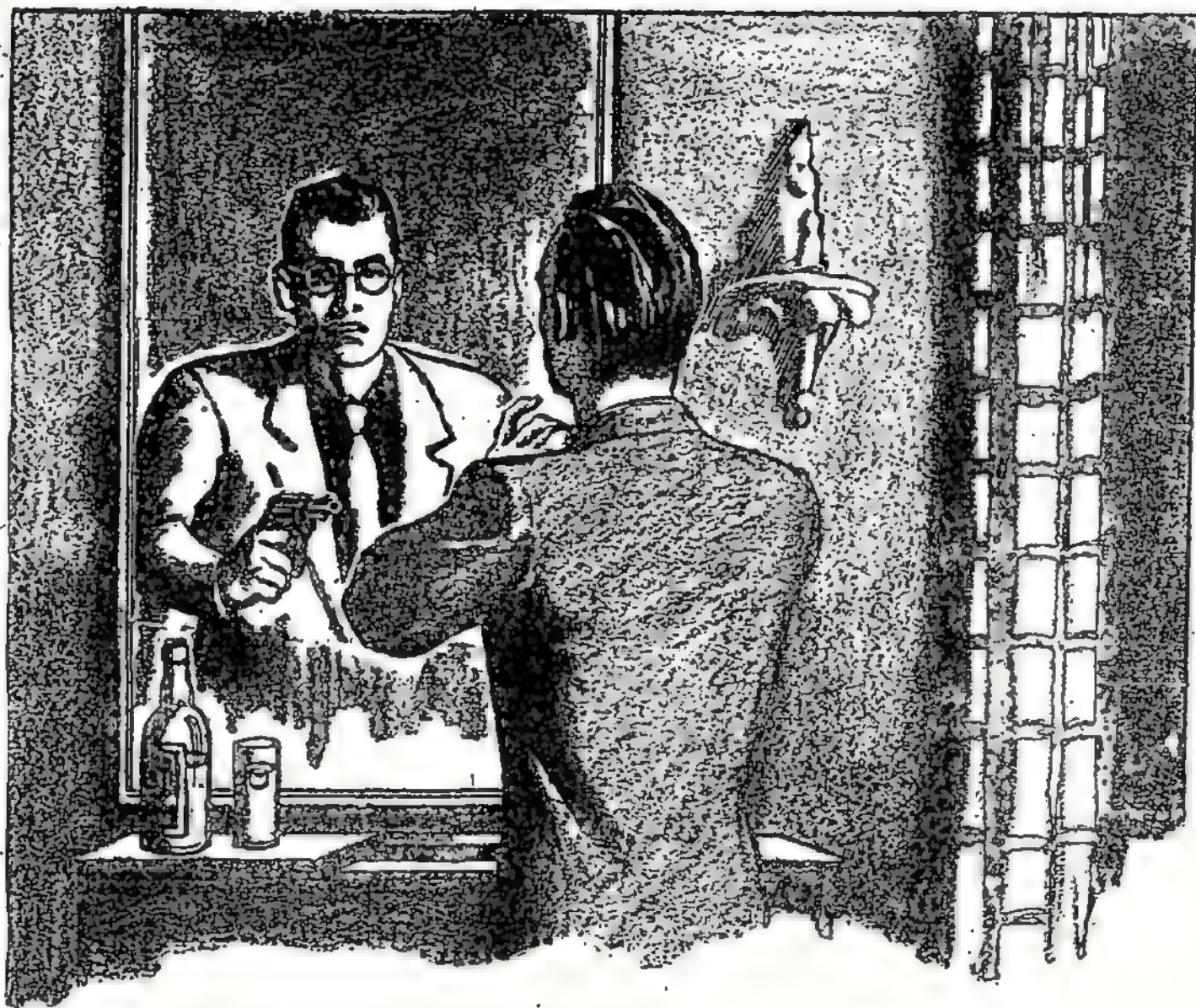
TELLURIUM is number 52 in the International Table of Atomic Weights. Its symbol is Te and its atomic weight is 127.5. Tellurium has a specific gravity of 6.27, it melts at 452 degrees centigrade, and boils at 1,390 degrees centigrade. The main source of supply today is from slimes from copper and lead refineries, and the flue dusts from telluride ores. It is a brittle, silvery white substance, and is used by makers of wireless equipment as a rectifier or crystal detector.



The Mirror

By William Lawrence Hamling

**The mirror was very old, and
it had a peculiar habit. It reflected
images, but all of them came from the past . . .**



Riley stared into the mirror, adjusting his tie. He didn't see himself, however. What he saw was a man with a gun, and the gun was pointing . . .

IT WAS a long, old-fashioned mirror, covered with the antiquity of age. It was strangely out of place in the room—bright with deft touches of the moderne. But Lucy had bought it, and that was enough for John Barrows. He stood in the living room before the mirror, adjusting his tie. He was having trouble with the knot. It wouldn't slip into place. His fingers kept fumbling awkwardly.

"My wife," he mumbled. "I'm going to lose her. I love Lucy more than life itself. But I know I'm going to lose her. George Carson is taking her away!

God, but I can't let that happen!"

The tie wouldn't knot. John Barrows slipped it open and started anew. His thoughts were heavy. *What shall I do? Damn this mirror! I can't focus my eyes in it. Maybe it's the silver. Lucy. Of course I haven't caught them yet, but I know! Those letters, those flowers, I don't send them! George is always dropping in . . . Yes, I know it's him!*

My friend. Stealing my wife! Maybe he really loves her. What's the matter with this tie? She's been talking of taking a trip. Out West someplace.

Reno! She could get a divorce there It's this crazy mirror. It keeps shimmering! I can't focus my eyes. Yes; I'm going to lose her. They're both laughing at me. If I only were sure . . .

Barrows tugged at the tie knot and his thoughts came aloud in a low mumble.

"I know he was here last night before I came in from New York. If only I could have seen him and Lucy together"

The tie was folding into place now. He could see it in the mirror, even though everything was hazy and shimmering. Suddenly his hand stopped manipulating the tie. He looked into the mirror and stiffened. The haziness had vanished and he saw—

Lucy was standing there beside the small liquor table. She was smiling as she poured drinks. Her lowcut evening gown revealed creamy white patches of satin skin. She was radiantly alive. She was looking up at—George Carson!

BARROWS wheeled away from the mirror. He gazed frenziedly across the living room. At the liquor table. There was nobody standing there. No Lucy, no George Carson. Sweat broke out on John Barrows' face. He stared back into the mirror. He couldn't see himself, but he did see *them*. George was moving closer now. There was a cigarette burning in his hand. He crushed it out in an ash tray and took Lucy's hands. She stopped pouring the drinks. She turned to face George and there was a happiness glowing in her eyes. George was pulling her gently to him. His arms folded around her. His head bent—and she gave her lips willingly, lingeringly.

"Stop!" Barrows' voice cried out. He was shaking and his eyes were wild with rage. His face was inches from

the mirror, staring. The scene began to shimmer, grew hazy, and then was gone. He was staring into his own haggard features. And there was a strange fear in his eyes. He turned his gaze away and shook his head. *Good God! he thought, Am I going mad? I did see them! I know I did! This mirror—can it be—No, I must be wrong, it's impossible—but this mirror always has been peculiar. I've noticed that shimmering before. Lucy picked it up at an auction. It is an antique alright. My God, Am I going mad? No it must be my imagination. Or an illusion—I wanted to see them together. Yes, that must be it, I was thinking so hard that I did see them, in my mind of course. But . . .*

Barrows turned slowly away from the mirror. He forced himself to be calm. He put out all thoughts of George Carson. He even tried humming a tune. Then he turned quickly back to the glass. He looked at himself reflected there. He smiled grimly and thought aloud.

"I was out of town Saturday. I wonder what Lucy was doing Sunday evening. Sunday evening. I wonder what . . ."

THE glass was hazy, almost a yellow opaqueness. There was a shimmering and John Barrows shook his head. The shimmering vanished. He was looking into a reflection of the living room. The lights were soft, only two end table lamps glowing. He could see the closet at the head of the hall. He looked at the liquor table. Two empty glasses rested there. His eyes shifted to the divan.

He began to tremble and sweat broke out anew on his face. Lucy was reclining on the divan. Her rich auburn hair was brushed back over her head onto an embroidered pillow. She was

clad in a sheer negligee and there was a smile of content and happiness on her face. She was looking up. There *he* was. Moving across the room toward the divan. His features were tense and expectant. He was flushed and glowing all at the same time. Now he was sitting beside her. His hands carressed her face, her neck . . . Lucy was clinging to him.

"Stop! Stop!" John Barrows cried out hoarsely. He twisted away from the mirror, trembling. There was a haunted fear in his eyes. A fear of the unknown, of things beyond his ken.

"John! What is it? What's the matter?"

Lucy Barrows was leaning over the upstairs landing. She was looking down toward the living room with frightened eyes.

"John, is anything wrong?" she called out again.

John Barrows stepped slowly from the living room and into the hall. He gazed up the staircase at his wife. She was beautiful standing there. There was surprise, and sudden wonder in her eyes. Her cheeks were flushed in nervous excitement. She was like a doll in a department store fairyland. The kind you want to gather in your arms. Barrows looked at her. His face was stern, unyielding. His eyes, two glowing coals of flame. Somehow his voice remained unchanged.

"Lucy, dear, come down here a moment."

Lucy Barrows moved slowly around the landing and descended the stairway. She was more like a graceful swan making an entrance into a hushed, sacred pool. She seemed to glide down the stairs. And then she was standing before him, looking up with puzzled concern.

"I heard you cry out, John . . ."

"It was nothing, Lucy. I was talk-

ing to myself." He looked at her very closely and for long silent moments. Did she sense that something was wrong? He saw her glance stray beyond him to the living room and back again. It was almost as if she expected to see something there, something that had made her husband cry out. Some dark secret, finally unearthed. Yes, that was it . . .

It was all becoming clear in his mind now as he watched her. Yes, it was all true. He could tell. That deep concern in her eyes. Was it for him? No, it was *because* of him! She was waiting for him to accuse her of her infidelity. That's what she wanted. It would make everything so simple for a divorce. Mental cruelty!

"John!" Her voice was tense, breathless. "Are you ill? Your face!" She forced a nervous laugh. "You should see yourself in a mirror!"

Mirror. Yes, there was a mirror in the living room. An old, strange mirror. I should see myself! You should see yourself!

SUDDENLY he was trembling. Her throat. It was so white and soft. He could see the pulse of blood in that slender whiteness. It would be so easy to close his hands over that throat, and tighten. But no, that would be murder. The law would make him pay for that. George Carson must pay. Yes, that was it.

"I won't be home for dinner tonight, Lucy. Do you mind?" His voice was calm, his face relaxed.

She frowned. "But I don't understand, John. Where are you going?"

"I've got to make a trip back to New York. Some business that I didn't clean up last week. I'll be back late tomorrow. You won't be lonely?"

The tenseness left her. She was the doll again, soft, warm, lovable. She

smiled up at him.

"No I won't be lonely, John, but I'm sorry you have to go again. I'll find something to do while you're away."

Of course you won't be lonely, my dear. Why should you be? Isn't this just what you hoped for, prayed for? Naturally you're sorry I have to go, and of course you'll find something to do. I wonder how long it will take you to telephone after I leave?

"I won't have to pack this time, Lucy. I won't be gone long enough. I'll hurry back as soon as I can."

She kissed him lightly on the cheek and he trembled under her touch. Then he turned away to the closet at the head of the hall. He put on his topcoat. Lucy was standing in the living room, lighting a cigarette. She smiled wistfully at him as he strode out the front door.

THE house was silent and alone in the early evening. John Barrows stood in the tall shrubbery across the street, watching it. He had been standing there for over an hour. His car was parked in a small wooded sub-division a few block away. Any time now George Carson should be coming along.

A light flickered on in an upstairs window. Barrows breathed a satisfied sigh. That was Lucy's room. She would be dressing up there. And soon she wouldn't be lonely. She was finding something to do.

Barrows left the shadows of the shrubbery. He glanced swiftly along the street. There was another house on the far corner, but the street was deserted. He walked swiftly across it and along the side of the house. His hand reached into his topcoat pocket. It closed over the butt of a revolver. He brushed the gun aside and dug deeper in the pocket. His hand came out with a key.

There was a small patio in the back

of the house. He circled it and came to the rear entrance. He fitted the key in the lock. It turned soundlessly. Then he twisted the knob and slowly pushed the door open. Seconds later he was in the kitchen, and then he was tiptoeing through the dining room and into the hall adjoining the staircase. He moved silently.

Upstairs he could hear Lucy humming. Then he had reached the end of the hall. He paused beside the closet and looked into the living room. The end table lamps were burning. It was nice and cozy. Just right. He pulled open the closet door and slipped inside. The door closed behind him, and it was dark. He settled himself in the rear of the closet, behind the clothing. His hand found the metal in his pocket. A cold grimness closed over him. He could wait now.

Time crept by. Lucy came downstairs. He could hear her moving around the living room. He could hear her humming softly. He heard the clink of glass from the liquor table. Then he heard the front door chimes.

Lucy's footsteps were quick out in the hall. He heard the door open and Lucy say:

"Hello, darling. I thought you'd never get here!"

He heard George Carson laugh, and the door close. Then they had moved into the living room. He held his breath as he heard Lucy approach the closet.

"I'll hang up your coat, George. You'll find drinks on the table."

The closet door swung open. He could see her hands grope among the hangers. He huddled deep in the rear, tense. Then the door was shut and the darkness closed in again.

He waited there, listening. They were laughing together now. Lucy's laugh was low and mellow with happiness. George's was boisterous like an

excited boy's. Music drifted in to him. The laughter stopped. He could sense Lucy in George Carson's arms, dancing across the living room rug.

Time crept on.

THE music ceased. There was silence for a moment. Then the clink of glasses echoed softly. John Barrows trembled with emotion. There was no loneliness out there. But there was a great loneliness creeping into his heart. Lucy was lost. Gone. Forever. He felt his love for her turning from a despairing ache into a cold deadly hate.

It was silent out there now. Then he heard Lucy sigh. George's voice came in a low mumble of words. Barrows heard them dimly. He knew what must be done. His hand closed over the weapon in his pocket . . .

Only the mirror saw the closet door open. The reflection was clear and sharp in the glass. But the mirror couldn't speak. It caught the image of the hand appearing in the doorway, clutching the revolver. The two on the divan didn't see it. They weren't watching the closet. They had no reason to. But they did hear the laugh that suddenly echoed through the room. And they jumped guiltily from the divan. They stared in shocked dismay as the closet door opened fully to reveal John Barrows standing there with the gun in his hand.

Lucy screamed. George Carson stood petrified.

And the shots rang out.

They died on their feet. And their dead bodies fell limply to the floor. The shots had been sure, accurate. Straight to their hearts. The laugh came again. Cold, grim, frenzied laughter. And then there was silence . . .

Barrows stood looking down at them,

still and quiet in death. There was no remorse in his heart, no sadness. They lay there like two castaway dolls, stripped of the beauty that had filled them in life.

Barrows took a handkerchief from his pocket and methodically wiped off the gun. He made sure his fingerprints were erased from the weapon. Then he knelt beside George Carson's body. He placed the gun in the dead man's hand, turning the limp fingers so the weapon pointed toward George Carson's heart.

Barrows rose and crossed to the liquor table. He took a long pull from an open bottle. He lighted a cigarette and surveyed the room. It was perfect. He could not have planned it better.

"You won't be lonely any longer, Lucy. Not any longer." His voice haunted the room. The stillness of death was in the air.

Barrows turned abruptly and strode off down the hall, through the dining room, into the kitchen, and out the back door. He locked it behind him.

He sat in his car for an hour. Then he started the motor and drove home, parking in front of the house. He entered the front door, closed it, and walked over to the telephone in the hall.

"Give me police headquarters, please." He caught his reflection in the mirror as he talked, and a grim smile pulled back the corners of his mouth.

IT was a clear case of suicide. The

Medical Examiner said so. The police technicians examined the position of the bodies, the gun held tightly in the dead man's hand, and they agreed. They shook their heads sadly as they carted the bodies past the distraught husband standing across the living room.

Presently only Detective Charles Riley remained. He was a short red-headed Irishman, dressed in a conserva-

tive blue worsted. He was looking steadily at John Barrows.

"You loved your wife, Mr. Barrows?"

Barrows began pacing the living room rug. He turned, and agony shone in his eyes.

"I loved her more than anything in the world!"

Riley nodded. "You were aware of the affair going on between your wife and George Carson?"

Barrows' voice was sad. "Lucy loved me. I know that. George must have seen how hopeless it was for him and in a moment of frenzy decided to end his life—and Lucy's too"

The Detective walked over to the liquor table. He looked down at the open bottle of brandy. "Do you mind?" he asked.

John Barrows shook his head and continued to pace the floor. Riley poured himself a drink and sipped it slowly.

"It seems funny to me that a man who is in love with a woman would kill her and then himself."

Barrows stopped his pacing and faced the Detective with tear-stained eyes. "What do you mean?" he demanded.

Riley shrugged. "Usually in cases like this it's the third party that gets killed. It's usually done so it will look like a suicide. Then the other two can collect the insurance and marry. Provided they aren't caught in their own trap."

Barrows wrung his hands in a beautiful gesture of agony.

"Must you go on like this? Haven't I suffered enough already? If only I hadn't left her tonight—if I could have been here when that rat came! God! Lucy—I'll never forgive myself!"

Riley sighed and put down his glass. He faced John Barrows. "Well, there's

no need for me to stay any longer. Of course, there'll be an inquest and you'll have to come. But it will only be a formality. The suicide verdict is almost a certainty."

Barrows breathed easier. He was calm now. He even managed a wan smile. "Of course, I understand about the inquest. I'll get your coat."

RILEY turned away from the liquor table as John Barrows walked across the room to the hall closet. Riley caught his reflection in the mirror. He approached it and straightened his tie against his collar. He looked puzzledly into the glass. It seemed to shimmer. Must be the light he decided. He couldn't get the idea out of his head that there was something queer about that suicide. It was too perfect, all too natural a setup. His thoughts mumbled aloud.

"I'd give a lot to know what actually happened here tonight."

The glass was shimmering. Riley frowned as he looked into it. A hazy yellow opaqueness glistened on the glassy surface. Then it was gone.

Riley stared into the mirror, transfixed. He saw the closet door opening. A hand came through that opening grasping a revolver. John Barrows stood with a gun pointing from the shadows, his face a reflected mask of hatred in the mirror.

Riley acted instinctively. His right hand dropped to his hip pocket and came up holding a gun. He jumped backward, smashing into the mirror and firing as his body twisted.

The crack of the bullet and the shatter of broken glass were simultaneous. Across the room, John Barrows swayed in pained surprise. He was standing in the closet doorway, holding a coat in his hand.

The coat fell. Barrows followed it,

his body making a dull thud on the floor.

Riley stared in mute astonishment at what he had done. His gun fell from his suddenly limp fingers as he tried to reason it out.

"He was trying to kill me—I saw him! Right in the mirror . . ."

Riley's voice faded and his eyes fell to the smashed fragments of glass on the floor. There was something strange about them. They lay there and seemed to be shimmering. Soft kaleidoscopic shimmerings. And then a pattern seemed to form from the myriad fragments. A pattern of death and murder

that came out of a closet. He saw Lucy Barrows and George Carson, their faces transfixed with fear. Then he saw their bodies lying limp and lifeless on the floor.

The shimmering grew fainter. The scene changed. He saw himself standing before the mirror. He saw John Barrows holding his coat in the closet door. He saw himself twist around, firing.

He saw . . . Nothing.

The shimmering was gone. The mirror was gone. There were only little bits of broken glass looking vacantly up at him.

PIERCING THE FUTURE

By GARY LEE HORTON

PROPHECY has always existed, though men of different ages and times have been willing to change their opinions about it from that of trusting completely in the sayings of the prophets, to openly scoffing and labeling it "humbug." Today most people laugh at prophecies while some at least secretly believe in them. Some prophets down through the ages have made nuisances of themselves by prophesying things that people did not want to believe. There is a legend to the effect that upon the lost continent of Atlantis, prophets who foresaw its destruction and announced it, were put to death. Although prophets have fallen far short of the 100 per cent goal, true prophecies have nevertheless occurred.

The amazing accuracy of the work of Nostradamus, 16th century astrologist, has proven that the power to see into the future has been possessed by at least one man. He foretold the events which were to occur four and five hundred years after his own death. The coming of Hitler and Mussolini, as well as their downfall, was fully revealed in his writings.

Prophecy was an integral part of ancient culture. For many years the rulers of states depended upon the famous oracle at Delphi to furnish them with information about their fate. In gratitude they built beautiful temples, a theatre with a huge stadium, and statues in ivory and gold. All that great wealth was accumulated because a woman, the Pythia, or priestess, chewed some bay leaves, breathed the gas which, either artificially or naturally, came from a fissure in the rock beneath the tripod on which she sat, drank some water from the sacred spring Cassotis, and by all these means passed into a trance-like state.

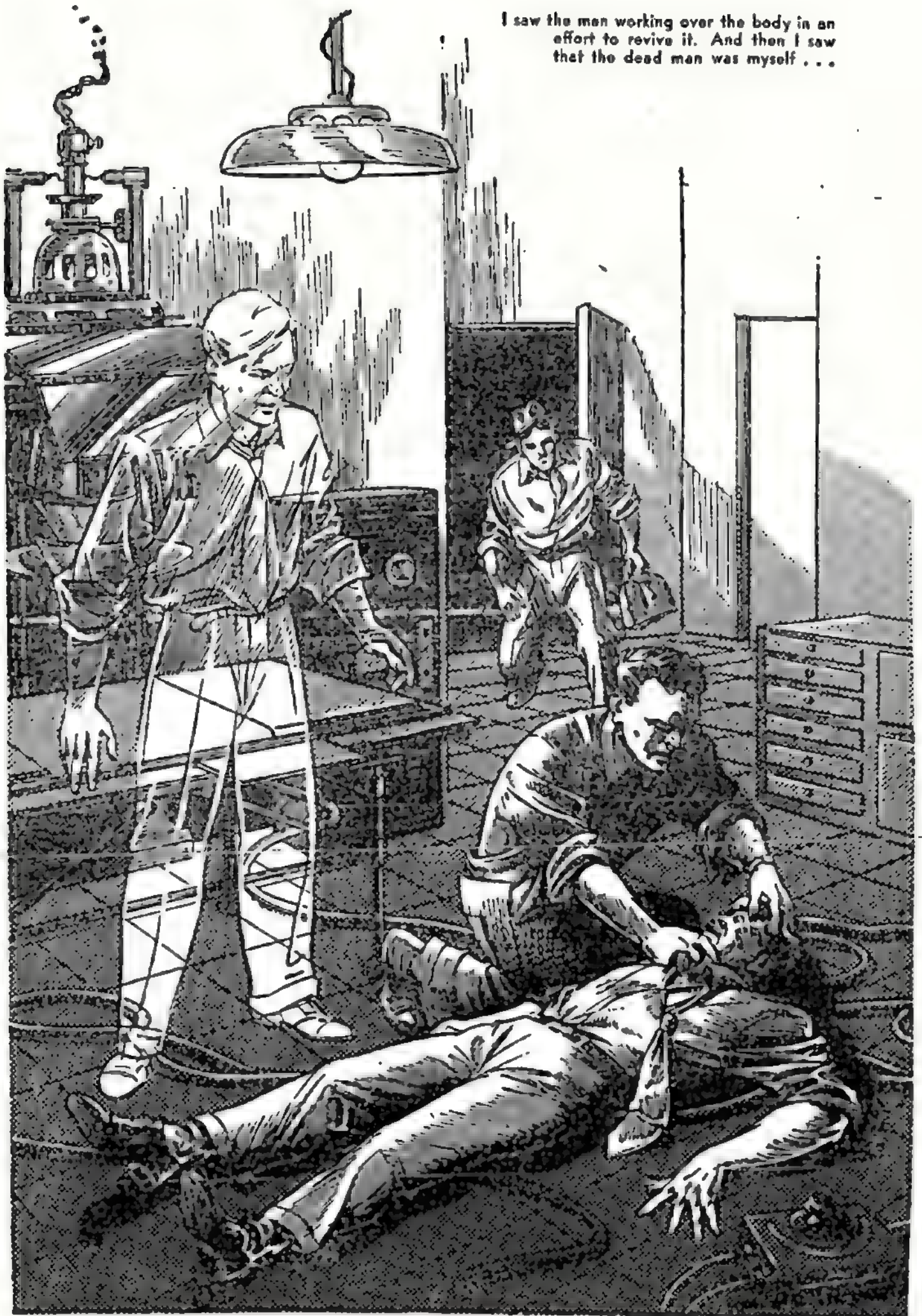
Questions were presented to her in writing and as her responses came, confused, incoherent, often incomprehensible to the questioners. The attendant priests clarified them, putting the words into verse the patron could understand. The wealth and long-enduring fame proved beyond a doubt that the people considered those prophecies to be valid.

Oracles were not confined to Greece. Egypt had them also. The Oracle of Ammon Ra, which dated all the way back to the fifteenth century B.C.; was visited by Alexander the Great. He was met with these words: "I give thee to hold all countries and all religions under thy feet." Alexander then went on to carry through his conquest of the world.

Scientists of our day believe there is a natural truth involved in this ability to look into the future. Dr. Alexis Carrel of the Rockefeller Institute, foremost among biologists and physiologists, recognizes clairvoyance in space and time. His words on the subject are as follows: "There is in certain individuals a psychical element capable of traveling in time . . . clairvoyants perceive not only events spatially remote, but also past and future events. . . . The facts of prediction of the future lead us to the threshold of an unknown world. They seem to point to the existence of a psychic principle capable of evolving outside the limits of our bodies."

Science has not even cracked the surface on the subject of clairvoyance. Why certain individuals have been given the supernatural power of seeing into the future generations of Time remains one of the secrets Nature still holds firmly in her grasp.

I saw the man working over the body in an effort to revive it. And then I saw that the dead man was myself . . .



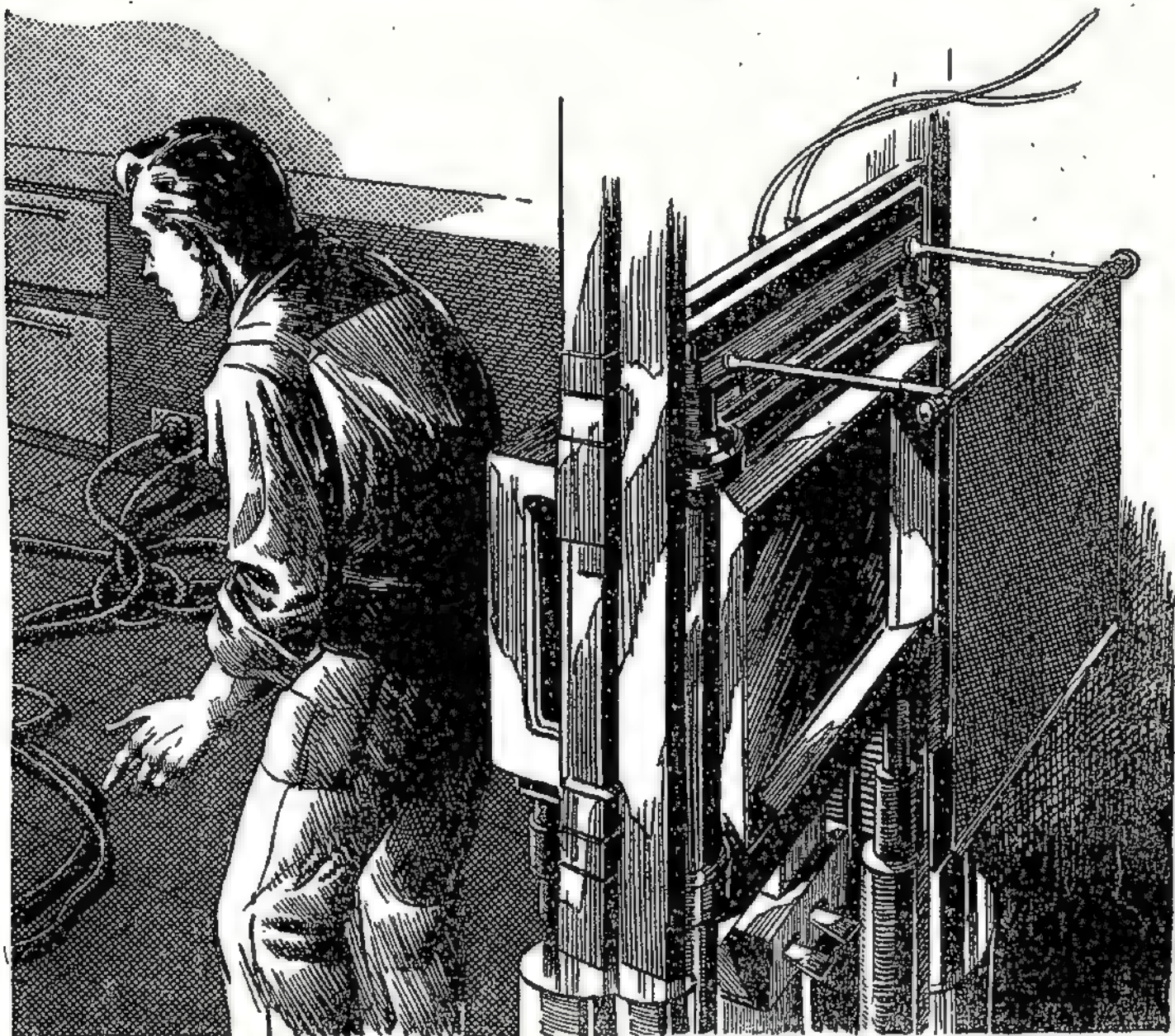
A Voice From Beyond

By **JOHN P. LENAHAN**

He heard a voice calling to him from the next world. So he went to find it

I AM writing this in the hope that it will be read by someone wiser than me. It is an attempt to aid mankind in its quest to span the gap between life and the Unknown beyond death. My own knowledge is meager, but compared to the ignorance prevail-

ing in this matter it is of vast importance, and may serve as the wedge to split the barrier. I have no urge to remain in this so-called "living" plane and wish to return to that state of perfect peace and contentment with which I had a faint contact. At present I am



biding my time in patient waiting and in this interim intend to leave this record. To begin:

My name in my present body is of no consequence, but in my original flesh and blood state I was Dr. Paul Craron, a successful practicing physician in Cleveland.

The first link in the chain of amazing events leading up to my present predicament occurred when the phone tinkled late one afternoon in my offices in the Rose building. I had just finished seeing the last of a large group of patients, and I was feeling mentally tired but otherwise satisfied.

A cheerful, vaguely familiar voice came over the line and my pleasure was genuine when he said, "I'm in town for a short time, Paul. This is Mike Cronin. I'm at the Cleveland. How about having dinner with me in the Bronze Room about eight?"

My answer was spontaneous, "Of course, Mike. It's been too many years since I last saw you. How did the Army let one of its crack psychiatrists get away for a short time?"

"I'm on my way to Washington, Paul. I decided to stop off here for an evening to renew acquaintances. I've already called Max Ellsman, John McCarthy, and Charles McKay. Can you come up to my room about 7:45?"

I agreed and hung up with a pleasant feeling of old friendship stealing over me. The dinner would be quite a reunion. We had all been close in medical school, but the frantic pace of the war and the tremendous load of patients had kept us apart.

I arrived a bit ahead of time so that I was the first to meet Mike in his room. He greeted me with a crushing handshake and a tall Scotch and soda. His bulk made quite a figure in the uniform of a major in the medical corps. The others soon arrived, and there was the

general confusion of back-slapping and chatter associated with the renewing of dormant friendships. I was surprised to note that Charley McKay was a Captain, medical corps. He said he had been in the Pacific theater for the past three years and was home on a month's leave.

We adjourned to the Bronze Room, where, we found a large table reserved for us in a somewhat secluded corner. The music from the orchestra was muted and blended with the soft lights to create a very relaxing atmosphere.

AFTER a hearty dinner we all sat back appraising each other in a friendly, critical fashion. The sight of these familiar faces brought back many happy memories. As the smoke from pipes, cigars, and cigarettes interlaced and curled above us, these memories were again made to live. Gradually the conversation swung to the present and we each brought ourselves up-to-date with the others. The trend of talk as it is wont to do under the relaxing influences of liquor and good tobacco, then shifted to personal experiences, interesting case histories, and unusual topics.

I noted that Mike had become silent and introspective as he gazed at the tip of his glowing cigar. The others soon felt his silence, and silence intruded among us. It was then that the psychiatrist became aware of it, and saw us all looking at him expectantly. He smiled slightly, took a deep pull on his cigar, and said, "There are a number of cases in which I have been involved which appear to be all peculiarly alike in one way. I would hesitate to voice my reasoning in connection with these patients except to a group of medical men, and then only if they were faithful friends, as you are."

I smiled. "Go on, Mike. We'll try

to be tolerant, and we realize all psychiatrists have an odd side to them." This brought a chuckle from everyone, and Mike resumed in his deep baritone.

"Well, I've noted a very odd circumstance quite often in those patients in which there is no traumatic injury but a sudden stoppage of the vital life processes. I'm referring to such patients as those who are electrocuted, drowned, or rendered unconscious by an inert suffocating gas. The case of an electrocuted person can be used as an example. The treatment in such a case, as you all know, is the stimulation of the central nervous system, which we do by giving artificial respiration. Of course, if the heart has stopped in such cases, the prognosis is very poor, but I have seen a few of these cases revived. The same mechanism holds true in drowning and suffocation. There also occurs to me those cases where the spark of life burns very low due to overdosage of barbiturates, or the sleep-producing drugs. Now, what arrested my attention was that in many of these cases, usually the more severe ones, when the patient was revived, he or she had no recollection of what had happened, appeared bewildered, and quite often was a typical case of amnesia. Our scientific explanation was that due to the lack of oxygen, many of the sensitive brain cells had been damaged, since, as we all know, these cells cannot live more than a few minutes without that precious oxygen. What puzzled me was that if memory had been affected, why was there no damage to the organic bodily functions? The brain cells governing muscular and nervous function are just as prone to damage from anoxemia as any others.

"With this line of reasoning I followed up some of these cases. I observed them, talked to their families and close associates. I found that in

all such cases there were definite personality changes associated with the amnesia. There was only one conclusion I could reach."

At this point Mike relaxed, crossed his legs, and deliberately lit a new cigar. It was exasperating after such a build-up. We glanced at each other to find puzzlement mirrored in every face. Max leaned forward, and in a quiet, patient tone asked, "Just what conclusion did you reach?"

MIKE looked surprised and smiled, "I thought it was obvious." Leaning toward us and using his glowing cigar as a pointer he said, "In every case the survivor of one of these terrible experiences was an entirely different and distinct individual from the person who had been injured."

We just stared at him numbly and I felt a chill race up my spine. John was the first to speak. "I don't quite understand, Mike. Are you referring to a type of split personality?"

"No," Mike answered, "I'm not quite certain just what I mean. All I can say is that although the body remained the same, an entirely different personality occupied it after the accident."

I chuckled and remarked, "The South Pacific seems to have had some lasting effect on you, after all. I think it is a fanciful theory, at best."

Mike just shrugged. "I'm not trying to force my beliefs on any of you. The topic is open for discussion."

A vigorous discussion followed, but John at last got us quieted down and said, "We must be certain of the terms which we are using as a basis for our arguments. I believe we all agree that the split or dual personality idea presupposes that two or more separate and distinct personalities exist within the brain of one person, and that one of these personalities is dominant, per-

haps for the entire life of the individual involved. However, at any time one of the other personalities may reach the conscious level and usurp the position of the original. I believe that is correct, is it not?"

He looked at each of us in turn, all of whom assented to his summary. He then continued, "Now, how many of you believe Mike's cases represent such a group of split personalities?"

Max and Charley heartily agreed that such was their conclusion. Mike was noncommittal, but I disagreed. "The cases are probably a group of unusual coincidences, or else Mike did not investigate them thoroughly, and the odd actions of the patients were probably due to the shock of their experiences."

The others laughed good-naturedly, realizing my rebuttal was weak and that they had called my bluff. No one, of course, thought of the discussion as being at all serious, and even Mike appeared to treat the topic as merely an engaging after-dinner subject.

It was quickly forgotten as our group broke up and made half-formed plans for a future meeting. Even I had no realization that the queer explanations which had flitted through my mind were commonplace compared to the weird truth which was to be revealed to me in a very personal manner within a short time. I returned to my practice the following day, and the odd discussion was relegated to a tiny recess in the back of my mind.

THEN one day I dropped into the hospital to view the X-rays of a patient in whom I was vitally interested. After having examined the plates and having nothing important to do at the moment I stopped to watch some work being done on the X-ray equipment. Large cables were strewn over the floor and led to the main control board. The

men were crouched in a small recess working on a maze of wire connections. I carefully picked my way among the cables to the spot where they were working. I couldn't quite see, so I leaned forward to look over their shoulders, at the same time putting out my hand to support my weight on a steel frame. As my hand came in contact with the frame on the control board, a searing, wrenching shock froze me to the spot. I could not breathe, my brain was exploding, a red haze danced in front of my eyes, and my muscles seemed to be frozen.

This feeling was short in length, and I was suddenly all right again. In fact I felt fine and made a remark calculated to offset the awkward result of my curiosity. However, no one was paying me the least attention, I discovered. Also I noticed that I could see all four walls of the room at once and everything in it. This puzzled me, but before I could start to fathom it, my interest was drawn by the excitement in the room. Everyone was gathered about a man who was slumping to the floor as one of the workers threw a master switch. A moment later an interne, clothed in white, ran in accompanied by a worker who evidently had summoned him. I watched with confused interest, noting at the same time that although I seemed to be on the fringe of the assembly, yet I was also in the center of it and on all sides.

The interne crouched by the body, which I noted with a bland indifference appeared to be my own. I approved of his rapid inspection and the manner in which he quickly began artificial respiration. However, I was, at the same time, faintly amused, since it was evident that the man was dead.

I attempted to explain this to him, but he ignored me and went about his rhythmic actions in a grim, methodical

manner. Shortly after, a pulmotor was rolled in and took over the interne's work. By now I felt faintly irritated and waited for their eventual admission of failure.

An expectant silence reigned as every eye focussed on the corner of the room. In the meantime I was attempting to explain scientifically my ability to be everywhere and see everything at once.

A LOW murmur from the crowd again brought my attention back to the body. It was impossible; the eyelids were flickering and occasionally heaving movements of the chest indicated voluntary breathing. My bewilderment was profound, but before my thoughts could orderly arrange themselves, the scene blanked out.

I found myself staring into Nothing; it felt as if I were present in a vacuum. All of my senses were in neutral. But before I could begin to adjust to this being in a void, all of my senses became stimulated. I could perceive a play of beautiful colors flickering around me, swelling, fading, and blending into a soft, restful panorama.

My hearing was caressed by muted music of such clarity and sweetness as to raise me to heights of a weird ecstasy.

At the same time I had a distinct feeling of being caressed; every nerve ending seemed to be given individual delicate attention.

The result in me was a feeling of utter contentment and peace. I neither wondered nor cared what happened next.

In the next moment this was all shattered. Now every nerve writhed in torture, the music became a discordant din, and the colors were actually painful in their harsh tones and contrasts. Escape was impossible as I seemed to realize without attempting to reason

why.

Then as suddenly as it had begun, it stopped, and I again found myself suspended in the Void.

In the middle of my mind I could feel a sense of probing, as if a finger were tapping. When I concentrated on it; a small voice became perceptible; it was not audible in the sense of hearing, but rather as if another more powerful mind, was creating my thoughts for me. The mental speech was sad and accusing: *"Why are you here, Lost Soul? Was your Life Force so weak that you abandoned your material body so easily? You assumed you had died, but it was a false assumption. You cannot partake in the eternal peace of our sphere nor in the agonies to which you may also be relegated until you have passed from the material sphere to our ethereal sphere in the normal manner."*

"I was sent to intercept you, but started a bit late due to my mistake in assuming that you would reclaim your body. However, another Lost Soul was present at your unfortunate accident and took advantage of your indifference and ignorance."

"You are not of the material living world nor of us. You are doomed to wander in the limbo between Worlds for all eternity. Without the encumbrance of your material body you will enjoy the ultimate triumph of the Mental state. The breadth of the Universe is your stage. But I warn you that your happiness in this State will be short-lived. Your only hope for the attainment of final life in eternity, be it everlasting peace and contentment or the agonies of the damned, is to find another Soul as weak as your own. You can then assume that body and die a natural death. But I must warn you that once you attain such a body you must make no attempt to end its life by your own hand, or you will again

find yourself in your present state."

MY mind was again blank. Slowly I absorbed and interpreted the information I had received. The first original thought I had was that I had the solution to the mystery Mike had puzzled over. Perhaps it might also be the explanation of the dual personality theory.

However, my pleasure was only momentary as the nature of my predicament struck me. I felt no despair at that time. The novelty of it all intrigued me. I was now Mentally in its highest degree, and determined to put it to the test.

Concentrating on my own office in Cleveland I found myself again in its familiar surroundings. There I was, sitting at the desk, or rather someone else in my body was sitting there.

He had papers scattered over the desk, and the office looked somewhat bare. He pressed the buzzer and Miss Simmons, my nurse, came in. My counterpart spoke to her, "I'm sorry I have to let you go, Miss Simmons, but as I informed you, I'm retiring from practice. I'm going to devote myself to writing."

He shook hands with her, smiled, and bade her goodbye.

After she had left, he sat down, but suddenly jumped up and walked over to the full length mirror against one wall and appraised himself from all angles. The humor of the situation struck me. After all, it wasn't every day that one acquired a slightly used body like a cast-off suit of clothes. I felt proud that I had attempted to keep my body in fairly good working order. Without any conscious effort I probed his mind, found that he approved of his new acquisition and was determined to hold on to it tenaciously. It seemed that in his other life he had been a

writer of some renown but had been drowned during a week-end party. Due to the liberal imbibing of alcohol which fogged his mind, he had been easy prey to another Lost Soul who had fortunately or otherwise been in the vicinity.

I soon tired of watching him and realized there would be no use staying with him, since he would be extremely cautious about any future accidents.

It occurred to me that I had planned to see a stage play currently playing at the Hanna, and I saw no reason why I should not. I reached the theater just as the curtain went up. I soon grew irritated for the sequence of the play seemed so obvious, and already I divined the climax.

So I retired to my blank void and meditated. Once I flitted from planet to planet but found nothing of interest. I had none of the patience of the research scientist or the curiosity of the explorer. Venus resembled the South American Jungles, Mars was arid, and Mercury bleak and forbidding.

I spent some weeks puttering around in this way, and then I noticed an increasing restlessness, irritability, and loneliness. There were moments in which I was thrown into moods of deep depression. At last it came over me that I was entirely alone and without companionship, and in addition had no goal toward which to strive. It was at about this time that I began to plan for the future.

Oddly enough, it was not my life on Earth that I missed, but rather those few haunting moments of ecstatic happiness shortly after my accident.

As a result I attempted to find persons who were liable to sudden death by drowning, electrocution, or asphyxiation of one sort or another. I remember thinking that it would be somewhat simple if one merely devoted one's self

to the problem whole-heartedly. Mentally I tabulated the various occupations involved, such as telephone line repairmen, radio and X-ray technicians, swimmers, sailors, and chemists.

I attached myself first to a sailor and found myself on the high seas. However, within a few days I crossed sailors off my mental list. I definitely proved, incidentally, that seasickness is purely a central nervous system phenomenon, and not at all concerned with the presence of a stomach.

I next traveled with a line repairman and had my first opportunity. After patiently hovering about him for a few days, I was rewarded when he suddenly got his wires crossed, or some such mistake, and there he lay awaiting my presence. It seems I hesitated too long, however, as he had already been occupied as I discovered to my chagrin when I proceeded to move in. The man's partner, who had begun to administer artificial respiration, was knocked kicking as two souls momentarily occupied space allotted for one. I quickly vacated, and was left with a new problem. I hadn't calculated that there were probably many other souls such as I vainly seeking a vacancy. A high degree of skill, luck, and brilliance were necessary to win in this battle.

My next opportunity was equally unfortunate. I had taken to roaming the beaches of Florida and California. Due to the prevailing difference in time at these popular spots, I was able to be present at both places during their most crowded hours. As I arrived at Miami one sunny day, a brawny, dark-skinned lifeguard was hauling in a pretty Miss who had gone down several times too many. As he prepared to start reviving her I wasted no time in availing myself of this opportunity. I was startled, however, to find that the original occupant was extremely fond of

life. She was quite indignant about my indiscretion, and I found it somewhat embarrassing.

THE next few years are best forgotten. Suffice it to say that I accomplished nothing. Many times my hopes had risen high as a foot or back carelessly brushed a live wire, or I silently urged on an intrepid swimmer watching for the first signs of faltering or tiredness. It was all for naught. My brilliant mentality also failed me. Telepathy and suggestion were impossible, since I found that I had no contact at all with these material beings. Despair gradually overwhelmed me until I withdrew into myself. I would brood for months in my environment of blankness. One might say it was a mental hibernation.

It was a stroke of luck and lightning which finally delivered me. I had retired to the country one Spring day, and lolled under a towering, massive tree. In my black mood I failed to notice a thunderstorm rapidly approaching, and was startled when two boys in their teens suddenly took refuge under my tree. One of the boys paused only momentarily, and then ran for the nearby farmhouse. The other boy, a tall, blond lad, shouted that he would rather remain dry, and he settled himself against the tree trunk.

The storm broke with an awesome fury, and the thunder rolled over the countryside in continuous reverberations. The boy had now become uneasy, and had stood up. At that moment there was a blinding flash and an enormous crash. The tree had been riven in its entire length, and the boy had received a minor part of the bolt. His body had stiffened momentarily, and then he slowly wilted. He fell right into me! I hadn't made any effort at all, and yet there I was the sole occu-

pant of a very wholesome body. Everything then blanked out until I came to in a large, airy bedroom.

I had planned such an awakening in every detail innumerable times so I very cleverly feigned an amnesic state until I had become familiar with my surroundings. I had become part of a family of five on a very prosperous farm. I fitted myself neatly into the family life, although I had originally been raised in the city. It was a unique experience learning the chores I was expected to perform on the farm. Going through high school again was somewhat boresome, but it had its compensations.

People in the vicinity began to look on the bolt of lightning as an act of God. Although my new father was patient with me he tended to get exasperated by my awkwardness and seeming stupidity in farm work. However, I was hailed as a minor genius. My school grades put me far ahead of my classmates. When I casually said that Mr. Whimple, a neighboring farmer, had Undulant fever, warned the teacher that Johnny Adams had early measles, and diagnosed typhoid fever in one entire family, people began staring oddly at me, but with a deep respect. I realized that it would be best if I kept my medical knowledge in the background, or someone might become too curious.

IT IS at this point that I am now while writing this record for the good

of humanity. I have cudgeled my brain for a final deliverance from my present tenure of service on this earth. I have been overcautious about electricity, and refuse to go swimming. I have thought of ingenious methods of destroying my present body but am not quite certain that it might be interpreted as suicide in that life beyond.

I know that my fate may well be that terrible state of mental anguish, but the hope that I may attain that state of glorious peace and contentment leaves me irritated at the long span of earthly years which stretch before me. I have given my adopted parents to know that my vocation is the clergy, since I believe that in such a way of life I can better meditate on my ultimate goal.

This record may be an explanation of the split personality theory, and it may also explain the rare instances of those seemingly dead having revived. However, I intend to devote myself, in the seclusion of a religious career, to a full investigation of these phenomena.

My memory of my experiences beyond death may be due to the fact that I was intercepted somewhat later than is usually the case. I am sealing this narrative and placing it in a safe deposit box with instructions that, if my release through death occurs before I have carried my investigations further, it is to be forwarded to a large university where its contents may be digested, and intelligently interpreted.

THE END

MOONSTONE MYSTERY

ONE of the most prized gems in India is the silvery-white moonstone. To it superstitious peoples have attributed many powers. Because the stone itself possesses a luminous quality, a moving inner light, it is supposed in the East that a living spirit dwells within, a spirit potent for good.

The moonlike inner light changes on the surface as the light in which it is viewed changes. This is

due to a reflection caused by certain cleavage planes in feldspar of the variety to which Moonstone belongs. Light gleams from beneath its surface in a band of soft sheen that fades almost imperceptibly into pearly shadow. There are no sharp definite edges to the highlight on the moonstone. This absence of sharp cleavage between light and shadow is what gives the gem its serene, mysterious beauty.

—Pete Bogg

MIRACLES OF BLOOD

BY JEFFRY STEVENS

Blood means life—but at one time it meant death, if improperly transfused. The trick was to learn how . . .

FOR centuries doctors dreamed of transfusing blood from strong, healthy bodies into the veins of sick and dying patients. But their attempts were tragic failures. In 1901, the Austrian scientist Karl Landsteiner came upon the clue that supplied one of the chief reasons why the doctors had failed. Human blood is classified into four distinct types. Blood of one type transfused into the veins of a person whose blood belongs to another type, may be fatal.

When doctors learned how to recognize blood of the desired type, direct transfusion was painful, tedious, and dangerous. And once blood is removed from the body, it coagulates in a few minutes.

The quest for an anticoagulate was begun in 1914 by Dr. Luis Agote of Argentina and on November 14, 1914, Dr. Agote was able to announce to the world that two tenths of one percent of sodium citrate in human blood would prevent coagulation. However, blood could not be kept more than a week. Extensive experiments on preserving and storing blood was made by Dr. Yudin of Moscow in 1930, and Yudin finally announced that blood could be stored for 35 days.

The first real blood bank was launched in 1937 at the Cook County Hospital of Chicago. Blood of all types was available instantly. A patient needing a transfusion received one; thereafter, friends or relatives donated sufficient blood to make up the deficit.

During the last few years the medical men have worked out a new solution which is the use of plasma, one of science's major miracles. After the red blood cells have been removed from the human blood, the yellow liquid portion which is left is the plasma which is dehydrated and frozen and stored away in plasma banks. Plasma pumped into the vein of a wounded person can mean the difference between life and death. Unlike whole blood, anybody's blood plasma can go into the body of anybody else. The first large-scale plasma project was launched by the American Red Cross in 1940, during the London blitz days.

Plasma fractionation has brought about new possibilities such as serum albumin, a new, compact blood substitute which does the job of plasma in treating wound shock with the advantage that only one fifth as much albumin is needed for transfusion as when whole plasma is used. Serum albumin has worked wonders for the wounded in the Pacific area.

Researchers next tackled the globulins—those elements in the blood which harbor the disease fighting antibodies. Most donors have stored up in their blood a mixture of antibodies acquired during years of successful disease fighting. These antibodies are being isolated now and put to work. The measles globulin studies are under way for other infectious diseases such as mumps, scarlet fever, diphtheria, and whooping cough.

Possibilities seem limitless. Amazing things are being accomplished with the plasma components all the time. A needed clotting component is thrombin and fibrinogen which can be concentrated in fine white powders. Joined in solution, it is known as fibrin. Scientists have been able to fabricate films, foams, glues and plastics with the aid of thrombin and fibrinogen, which is used in the most delicate surgery.

Fibrin substitutes for injured dura, the membrane that covers the brain. Smooth, strong and elastic, it is immersed in water, and then easily fitted over the brain. Eventually the body builds up a pseudo-membrane which replaces the blood fibrin film.

The miraculous blood-clotter is fibrin foam. Where there is continuous bleeding from innumerable points too small to be stopped by clamps, the spongy fibrin foam is plastered on and the bleeding stops instantly.

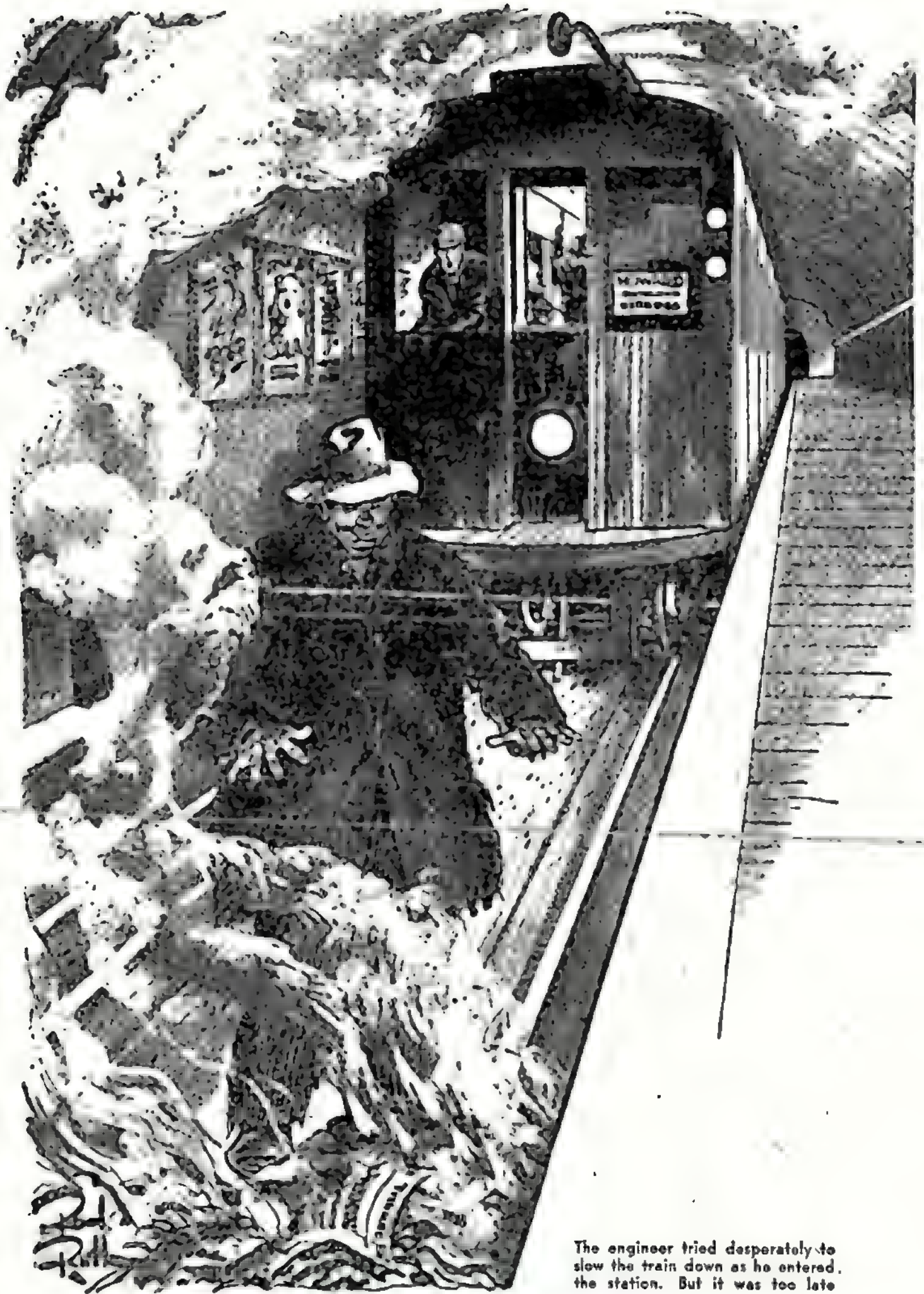
Fibrin, as a glue, has been a boon to skin grafting. Particular difficulty was encountered by doctors, when repairing the small angled regions of the body, such as the nose and the ears, where skin grafts must stretch.

Today, surgeons merely spray the injured area with thrombin, then dip the skin grafts into a fibrin solution and fit them to the injured area.

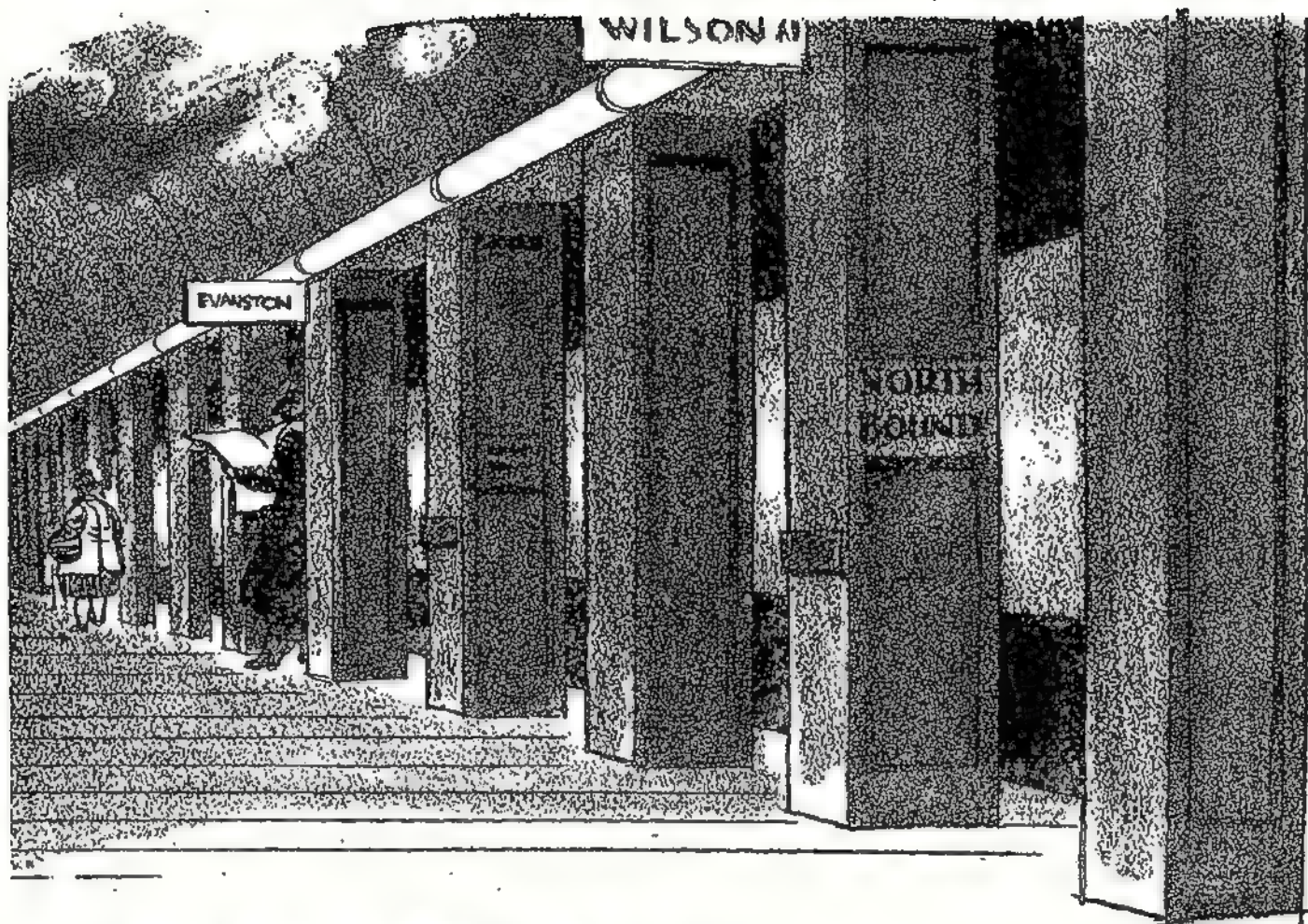
Red blood cells, which were formerly thrown away as useless, now are being transfused into anemic patients. The red cells are also being used to combat many diseases some of which are acute arthritis and tuberculosis.

But the red cell story doesn't stop with transfusion. Doctors at the Mayo Clinic have developed a red cell powder that will last indefinitely. The dusting powder is used on conditions that do not show normal mending.

Blood may now become an all purpose healer with the aid of continuing sources of donated blood and with the dire efforts of doctors and scientists.



The engineer tried desperately to slow the train down as he entered the station. But it was too late



I'll Take the Subway

By BERKELEY LIVINGSTON

He was just a bum, but overnight he became a millionaire by buying the subway. But by that time he was dead

"**R**EALLY my good fellow," said Sully M. Tveet amiably, "there is no reason to feel badly. You tried hard. It was simply a case of too much sales resistance."

Egbert Presswell looked over the shoe littered floor. Then he looked up at the round, bland features; the wide, innocent blue eyes; the curving child-

ish mouth of the moron before him, and snarled:

"Nuts!"

Happiness ringed Tveet's lips; glee was in his voice:

"Come now, Egbert. I pointed out the structural defects in those shoes: pointed out too, the reasons for their being seconds. Yet you insist upon ask-

ing the regular retail price. No. I'm afraid I must go elsewhere."

Presswell groaned. His oddly shaped glasses slid further down his snub nose, as his face expressed the disgust he felt.

"Listen you old goat," he began, trying to keep a badly frayed temper in control, "why must you come here to bother me? With ten thousand other shoe stores in Chicago, why must you come to me?" Suddenly, Presswell's nerves snapped; "Dammit," he yelled up into the bland features, "you've been here three times this week. Have you bought anything? No! You've got five stinking dollars which Frank Gleason gave you out of the kindness of his heart, but will you spend those five bucks on something you need? No, you old fake, you'll wait 'till someone comes along with some con item and then you'll fall, just like any other sucker!"

"'Tis of no avail, Egbert," Tveet said unctuously, starting toward the door. "I simply will not be *sold* anything."

Egbert Presswell watched the pear shaped, knock-kneed figure walk through the door. He shrugged narrow shoulders in a helpless gesture and turned to the task of picking up the shoes scattered all over the floor. And as he bent to his work, an occasional sighing whisper could be heard. He would punctuate by slamming each shoe into its box. "Every jerk on Van Buren Street—Sully Tveet, what a name, and what a character—someday, I hope, someone will sell him the Field Museum—"

SULLY M. TVEET was unaware of the abuse being heaped upon his absent head. He was in a great glow of self-approval, as he stepped into the Chicago Coffee Shop. It was the dol-

drum hours between lunch and dinner. A few shabbily dressed men sat at the bar. Charley Borsh, the proprietor, and Harry, his clip artist bartender, were discussing new ways to offend the public. Harry was pleading:

"Why can't you let my customers alone, Charley?"

"Listen, Harry," Charley said, emphasizing his words by rapping smartly on the cash register. "That kind of customer I don't want. And don't tell me how much money he spends."

That remark made Harry mad.

"Oh, f'r heaven's sake, Charley!" he said exasperatedly, "Dat man spends a ten dollar bill every time he comes in. All he wants to do is drink, not listen to politics."

"Well any man who doesn't know—" Charley got halfway through his rejoinder, when Sully M. Tveet made his appearance.

"Ah there, Mr. Borsh," Tveet's unctuous voice oozed oil. "Discussing new ways and means to clip your trade, I suppose?"

"And who asked you?" said Charley, ready to make an issue of it.

"No one, I assure you," Tveet replied. "It is just that I have such a vast store of sympathy for your poor customers."

"Well, why don't you take your sympathy and your trade elsewhere," was Charley's suggestion.

"I would, Charley, but where else could I find such superlative beef, such palate-tickling red hots, such fragrant, appetizing soup?"

"Say, now ain't that the truth," Charley beamed at such praise. His voice boomed out, like a pitchman with a hot tip, "Tell 'em! Tell 'em where you get the best food in the Loop! Right here, ain't that right? Now what can I sell you, a nice corned beef plate lunch, or maybe—"

"Sell me?" said Tveet, "Now really, you know me better than that. I will take a cup of your coffee, though."

Charley watched the odd figure seat himself on a stool and sourly observed:

"Yeah. I forgot. Nobody can sell you anything. But someday . . ."

There was an unspoken wish in the last words.

"Say," said Harry, as he poured the coffee for Tveet, "I've known you for a long time, haven't I?"

"Ten long years," Tveet replied.

Harry slapped the heavy china cup on the bar with a bang.

"Then tell me this. When are you going to throw away those rags you're wearing and get yourself some decent clothes? I've been wanting to ask you that from the first day I saw you. But this is the first time I've been sober enough to really see what they looked like."

TVEET looked fondly down at the old fashioned Norfolk jacket he wore. There was admiration in his eyes, as he looked down at the skin-tight trousers, whose waistband had become a little too small and so permitted a four-inch V of purple shirting to show. He looked into the mirror and smiled with childish affection at the reflection of purple shirt offset by a scarlet tie with yellow polka dots.

"Now really, Harry," Tveet gently scolded, "I've always admired this outfit. And it does sort of set me off from the ordinary man."

"It sets you off, all right. Like a Roman Candle," said Harry sarcastically. "Look. I'm not talking about the color scheme. That's your own bad taste. But the fit; it ain't!"

"Pooh!" poohed Tveet. "The fit! I got these clothes for a song, I'll have you know. And they've lasted a long time."

"Yeah. Well that song went out with the hoop skirt, dopey. Why don't you go see Harry the Hock. He was telling me about a suit he's got there for a fin. He's a goniff, but so are you. You oughta have a good time tryin' to get it for a deuce."

Tveet's eyes glistened in anticipation. He and Harry had a feud of long standing between them. So far, Harry had lost all the bargain battles they had.

"Thank you, old man," Tveet said, as he slid off the stool. "And here's something for your advice. Perhaps it will come into service again."

He took something from his jacket pocket and laid it on the bar.

Harry picked it up.

It was an unused coffee ration stamp.

HARRY the Hock was busy with a customer, when Tveet walked into the pawnshop. Tveet listened with pleasure to Harry work.

"Sorry mister," the Hock was saying, "but the setting on this ring is old-fashioned and besides, nobody buys diamonds cut like this anymore."

"Old-fashioned!" the other exclaimed. "Of course it is! That ring is an antique. It has an intrinsic value far beyond any price you could pay."

The Hock's voice broke in. There was a note of finality in it: "Listen mister. I buy rings, not antiques; and for cash! For memories, I don't pay a single dime."

"All right, you win, give me the money," the other said, sadly.

"Win," said the Hock, as he counted out some bills, "what d'ya think this is, a game? I'm here to make money, get it."

"Ah, there, my dear fellow," said Tveet, when the customer left, "how right you are. And wrong too. After all—"

"Aah, shut up with that 'dear fellow' stuff," snarled Harry. "You ain't here to do me good! All you've got is conversation."

"—business *is* a game. You take a chance. Sometimes you win and sometimes, you lose," concluded Tveet, just as though Harry hadn't said anything at all.

The jangling sound of the telephone prevented the Hock from making his rebuttal. Leaving Tveet to his own devices, the Hock went to the rear of the pawnshop, where the desk and safe which constituted the furniture of his office was located. Lifting the phone from its cradle he barked a "Yeah," into it.

Many people claimed Harry the Hock was related, in some way, to a horse. And there *was* something equine in the low, sloping brow; the wide set, brown eyes; the broad, splayed nose, the thick lips. And when the Hock concentrated mentally, the resemblance was even more pronounced. Then his buck teeth juttied out past his upper lip, and his chin got lost altogether. Just then the Hock looked like he was ready to whinny for joy.

"What's that?" he yelled. Then, as he kept an eye on Tveet, he lowered his voice and said: "Who told you that? . . . Frank Gleason, eh . . . a thousand bucks in cash . . ." he whistled at that. "Yeah, he's here now . . . Oh, you sent him over . . . thanks. Say, Harry, I got an idea. Is Vic the novelty man there? . . . Well, ask him if he's still got those phony stock certificates there?" He whistled a tune of his own arranging, while he waited for Harry to find out what he wanted. The receiver became alive again.

"Yeah . . . he has? Good! Send him over . . . No, that's why I think I can pull this deal. Sully's never seen Vic . . . Sure, if I make the grade,

you'll get your end . . . Okay, I'll keep Sully here. But tell Vic to get here sober."

"So what can I do for you?" the Hock demanded, when he returned. He knew that to act in anyway different from his usual self would bring suspicion to Tveet's mind. So he snarled again:

"Well, come on, you old jerk. I ain't got all day. What's on your mind?"

"I have been told, my dear fellow," said Tveet calmly, as though the Hock's bluster was something that came with the sale, "that you have a garment here, which is becoming moth eaten. As a consequence you find it necessary to relegate it to the refuse heap. The thought occurred to me, that, since—"

"Look Sully," the Hock interrupted, "if you're interested in that gray suit in the window, it'll cost ya a saw buck."

"—I may in the near future find need for a spring outfit, perhaps you would be willing to let me have it, for, let us say, the cost of what it would be to clean; a dollar," finished Tveet.

"That's what I like about you," said the Hock. "The way you *don't* make sense." He snuffled loudly, then pulled out a bright colored handkerchief and blew trumpet blasts from his nose. It was all done for effect, however. More for the sake of arranging the words in his mind.

"So you're willing to *take* the suit off my hands for a buck. Well, isn't that too damned kind of you. Get this, you dope! That suit cost *me* a fin! And you want it for a buck?"

TVEET'S red lips curved softly in a smile. The preliminaries were now over. He wasn't interested in the window suit. While the Hock was on the phone, Tveet's eyes had been busy

taking stock. He had soon found the suit that Harry the bartender had spoken about. A little tag bore the price mark. Five dollars.

"Come now, Harry," said Tveet, using that superior tone, the sort of voice that he knew enraged the Hock, "you don't expect me to believe that frayed and moth-eaten garment has *that* much value to you?"

"Keep talking, brother. The price'll go up another fin, soon."

"Oh well, if you're not interested in doing business—"

"Sure I'm interested," grunted the Hock. "But you—you act like I was tryin' to cheat you out of your last nickel."

"You are! Ten dollars for that suit," Tveet's voice expressed horror. "Then what would you want for the brown suit in the case there, a hundred?"

"I get it," said the Hock slowly. "You're short and you need a suit. Well, tell ya what I'm going to—excuse me, Sully," he said as the street door opened and a well-dressed man came in. "Be back with you in a minute."

The well-dressed man whispered something into the Hock's ear. The pawnbroker's lips formed an O of astonishment, then they both looked conspiratorily at Tveet and moved to the far end of the store.

Tveet could hear snatches of their conversation, occasionally. None of it made any sense, however. Then Harry exclaimed, "Ten thousand! Where am I gonna get that kind of dough tonight?"

The other whispered pleadingly again, and Tveet heard Harry say:

"I've got five hundred. Of course if you can get more, that's up to you."

Then the other said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by Tveet:

"But don't you see. These shares

will make you the majority holder of the Subway stock. In other words, you will *own* the Subway."

"Sorry, Mr. Bishop, but that's the best I can do, five hundred dollars. Take it or leave it."

"I'll make it six hundred, Mr. Bishop."

They turned startled faces at the sound of this new voice. It was Sully M. Tveet who had made the offer.

"Hey!" said the Hock. "Who asked you in on this deal?"

Bishop, his well groomed face expressing annoyance, looked down his nose at Tveet. His voice matched the look:

"If you don't mind, sir, we are discussing something of a private nature."

Tveet had been fumbling at his trouser pocket. They heard the click of a safety pin being released and Tveet's hand came out of the pocket. Clutched in his fingers was a huge roll of greenbacks.

A WHISTLE of astonishment broke from Harry the Hock's lips. Bishop merely gasped at the size of the roll.

"Well, Mr. Bishop," said Tveet again, "I'm offering six hundred."

"Hey!" expostulated the Hock again. "You can't do that to me!"

"Now, Harry. Let Mr. Bishop be the judge. Does six hundred—"

"Seven hundred," broke in the Hock.

Bishop looked delighted. He watched Tveet with expectancy in his eyes. The oddly dressed character came up to expectations. He said:

"Eight hundred."

"And fifty," amended the Hock.

"Nine hundred," was Tveet's retort.

There was an interval of silence. Bishop looked from the pawnbroker to Tveet and back again.

"Wait," said the Hock. He turned and went into his office. They could

hear the safe door being opened. Then he returned. There was a thin sheaf of money in his hand. His forehead showed a fine film of perspiration. He looked bitterly at Tveet, as he said in a final tone:

"Nine hundred and fifty, Bishop. My last offer."

For once Sully M. Tveet's face lost its air of bland composure. They could see a vein throb in his forehead. His tongue came out to lick dry lips. And he kept wiping the palms of his hands along the seams of the skin tight pants. Twice his lips opened and closed without sound. Then the words came out in a frantic rush:

"I've got a thousand dollars here, Mr. Bishop. If you think that's enough?"

Bishop looked over at the Hock, who sighed and shrugged his shoulders in resignation.

"Well sir," said Bishop beaming at Sully, "you have made the best deal of your life. Imagine! Buying the subway for a thousand dollars! Believe me sir, if I weren't strapped for money, if I didn't need this grand—I mean thousand dollars, to pay—"

"Uh, Bishop," said the Hock hurriedly, "don't you think you oughta, uh, close the deal now?"

"Oh yes," said Bishop. He reached into the brief case he had been carrying, when he came in and extracted a number of beautifully engraved, green and gold colored stock certificates.

"Do you have a pen, sir?" asked Bishop.

Harry supplied the pen.

"And now, sir," said Bishop, "your name please."

"Sully M. Tveet," answered Sully.

"I must have the full name, sir."

Sully's face was flushed in embarrassment when he answered:

"The M stands for Makemoney."

Harry the Hock rocked with laughter.

"Hah!" he chortled. "Sully Make-money Tveet. What a monicker. Makemoney! That's hot. You couldn't make money if the government gave you a press. Who blessed you with that?"

"My mother," replied Tveet, sadly. "There were ten of us in the family. And we were all named after people of literary note. I was the youngest. Father wanted to name me Sully Makepeace Tveet, but mother objected. She said there hadn't been any of the children who lived up to the names, so she was going to name me. With the result that you have heard."

BISHOP had been writing all the while Tveet was talking. Now he was done. Handing a number of the gaudily engraved certificates to Tveet, he said:

"There you are, sir. Fifty-one shares. A clear majority. Now you own the subway."

"And believe me, I'll take it," replied Tveet.

He stuffed the stock certificates into the inside pocket of his jacket, and left, without even a backward glance.

As soon as he disappeared from view the Hock and Bishop burst into almost hysterical laughter.

"What a moron!" gasped Bishop. "But where did he get that grand?"

"Didn't Harry tell you, Vic?" asked the pawnbroker.

"No."

"Well, you know the old guy ain't got no place to stay. So he's been floppin' in this all night movie house. They kicked him out the other day and told him to stay outa there. So last night, Sully hies himself to a neighborhood show. Figures he could hide somewhere when the show closes and sleep

there all night. Turns out it's Bingo night and the Cashier gives Sully a ticket."

"You mean—"

"That's right, Vic. The prize was a grand and Sully cops it."

"Well, I'll be damned!"

"Later, Vic. Right now, I'll take six hundred as my end. And don't forget, give Charley's bartender a case note. I promised it to him."

And as Vic counted his share, Harry the Hock leaned back against the long, display show case and looked thoughtfully up at the ceiling.

"So I dood it," his soul whispered in joy. "I sold the guy *who couldn't be sold anything!* And what a sale! The oldest 'Con' trick in the book. The 'gold brick' business. And *he* fell for it."

It was the finest bit of selling, he had ever done. Something to be proud of indeed.

SULLY M. TVEET walked up Van Buren Street. His feet met concrete firmly, judiciously. But his head was in the clouds. Every few seconds, he would pat his jacket to reassure himself the precious stock certificates were where he had placed them. He hummed a gay little tune, as he walked along, nor did he note the odd looks the other people gave him. His thoughts were all on the fine business deal he had made.

"How wonderful," he thought, "only yesterday I had nothing. And tonight, because of my capacity to judge the proper buying moment, I am a traction magnate. The owner of the Subway, indeed!"

A sigh of ecstasy escaped the rosebud mouth, and his feet did a little jig on the sidewalk. Then he began to speculate on how much money the Subway took in. He became a little dizzy at the astronomical figures his mind

computed. He passed one of the fluorescent lighted Subway entrances, and another. At the third he stopped short.

"This is ridiculous!" he exclaimed aloud. "Here *I* am, the owner of this enterprise, and I am on my way to the park, to find a bench on which to sleep."

He posed there at the top of the entrance in an attitude of deep thought. Then making up his mind, he descended the short flight of stairs leading to the mezzanine. He was confronted by several turnstiles and a ticket agent's booth.

He was about to pass through the turnstiles when a voice came through the booth window:

"And where do you think you're going?"

"My good man," said Tveet complacently, "I am about to descend to the Subway."

"Not without paying a dime, you're not!"

"I—I pay a dime? Don't be childish. *I* do not have to pay anything."

"No? Well, neither you, nor anyone else, rides without paying. So beat it, 'bo, before I call a cop."

Tveet was pleased with the zealous devotion the cashier showed. But this calling of names angered him. He glowered in rage and stormed at the cashier:

"My good man, that will be enough. You are fired! This very moment! Just see the bookkeeper for your check."

He turned away, satisfied with himself at the firmness he had displayed, and thrust his body at the turnstile. It wouldn't turn.

"Damn! Must be broken. They aren't very careful with the equipment around here. I see where some changes will have to be made," said Tveet, as he stepped over the spokes of the turn-

stile. Nor did he pay any further attention to the cashier who had yelled:

"Hey! You can't do that! Stop! Your dime!"

He went down the flight of stairs which led to the train platform. He sighed in pleasure when he saw the well-lit platform. The benches along the wall took his eye next. Finding one with a newspaper on it, he sat down and began to read. But he couldn't concentrate on the news print. His eyes roved in delight over the wonders of the place. Those signs, "No Smoking," "Keep Out," "Exit," "Entrance" and "No Loitering." He liked that one especially.

"An excellent idea," he whispered. "Gives the place tone. Too many bums would come down here to sleep. Can't have that happen, you know."

He started to stretch himself out on the bench, when a new thought popped into his mind.

"I've never seen the wonders of this place. Might as well make an inspection of my property."

He wasted no further time in speculation but walked to the platform edge and lowered himself to the tracks. It was done so matter-of-factly the rest of the people on the platform gave his action no thought.

The tracks disappeared down a curve in the tunnel. Tveet walked the ties between the rails and followed the tracks into the curve.

AS SOON as he was out of sight of the platform, he was in a new world. He sniffed the damp, dank air with delight and gazed with awe at the red, green and yellow lights gleaming in the gloom of the tunnel. His steps echoed hollowly along the trackway.

He had noticed embrasures, wide enough and long enough to contain a man's body, cut into the concrete of

the walls. After he had walked for a while, he became tired and remembered what he'd seen. At the next embrasure, he decided to call a halt to his inspection. Stepping into the narrow cut in the concrete, he lay down and went to sleep.

He awakened some time during the night, feeling chilled. He sneezed several times and wheezed:

"Draughty place this Subway. Bad heating system they have here. Got to change that. H'm." He sat silent for a few minutes wondering what could be done about getting warm again. Then he remembered the newspaper he had picked up on the platform. It was in his jacket pocket. He realized his little hide-away was too confining for a fire. But the wide tracks provided ample space.

He made a neat mound of the paper and set fire to it. Squatting before it he warmed his hands in the pleasant heat it threw off. Nor did he see the approaching lights of a subway train. The roar of the train was just another tunnel noise to him.

James McCarthy, motorman on the Ravenswood Subway Express got the green light on the last curve before Grand Avenue. He liked these Subway runs. It was so quiet and peaceful speeding down these tracks under the concrete vaults of the roof. Almost too peaceful. Then he was around the curve and—peace ended.

A fire! In the middle of the damn tracks. But in the instant it took to reach it, he saw it was only a paper bonfire. He didn't see the figure of the man crouching beyond the fire . . .

SULLY M. TVEET opened his eyes.

The fire was out. He stretched widely and groaned between yawns:

"Oh dear! Must have fallen asleep. These ties are rather rough on the

body."

He got up, started to go back to his resting place, then changed his mind.

"Think I'll get something to eat first. Maybe the Coffee Shop's still open."

He walked back to the station platform and clambered up on it. No one paid any attention to him. He walked back the way he had come in and after climbing the turnstile gave vent to a childish trick. He stuck out his tongue at the cashier. But, although the man was looking straight at him, he didn't act as though he saw Tveet.

"There you old fool," said Tveet, as he started up the steps, "that's what I think of you. And I'm going to see to it that there'll be someone else in your place tonight."

The Coffee Shop was closed but a Cafeteria nearby was still open. Tveet searched his pockets and found two dimes.

Even as he sat at a white-topped little table to which he took his coffee and doughnuts, he was busy mentally congratulating himself on the deal he had consummated.

"What luck!" he thought. "Imagine buying the Subway for a thousand dollars! Imagine *having* a thousand dollars!"

Then a disquieting thought struck him.

"Perhaps I was rooked by a sharper?"

Then as he remembered the stock certificates, "No! I'm just being foolish."

Still, to make certain, he pulled the certificates from his pocket and examined them. It was true! Each and every one of them certified that Sully Makemoney Tveet had bought one majority share in the Chicago Subway. And since there were one hundred shares and he had fifty one shares, then what Bishop had said was true. *He*

was the owner.

He attacked the doughnuts and coffee with an added zest. Just as he bent close to the cup into which he had dunked the last piece of doughnut, he heard his name called.

"Sully Tveet! By all dat's holy. If it ain't my old pal. I sure didn't expect to see you."

Tveet looked across the table and bellowed:

"Mike Toby!"

A PUZZLED look stole into his eyes, as he looked closer at the wizened little man in the too-large topcoat. He looked long at the pale face with its week-old growth of beard; the sharp nose; the humorous mouth and last, the bright little eyes, sparkling with good humor. He sighed deeply and said:

"So it wasn't true! I can see you're here. Oh man, it's good to see you."

"And it's good to see you too, Sully. Seen any of the old gang?"

"No. But I've been away for a while. Now that I'm back, I'll have to—say Mike, where are you staying?"

"Where the hell d'ya think I'm staying? At the Drake? Same old place, Grant Park."

"That's funny! I've been, uh, sort of taking my nocturnal ease under the stars also. But I've never seen you around."

"No," said Mike, grinning widely. "Well maybe you ain't been in any condition to see me. Of course dat's over. We'll see lots of each other now, huh pal?"

"Of course Mike," said Tveet warmly. "We will see more of each other. And say," he remembered his good fortune, "do you know what happened to me this very evening?"

"Are you kiddin'?" asked Mike.

Tveet looked blank at that.

"I see, pal. You wanta tell it in your own way. Well go ahead, I'm listenin'," Mike said.

"I do wish you would stop these childish interpolations," said Tveet testily. "Of course I want to tell it in my own way. Do you know of a better one?"

Mike shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well, then! This evening I—ahem, purchased the Chicago Subway."

Whatever Toby was expecting, it certainly wasn't that. He jerked erect in his seat and looked bug-eyed at Tveet.

"You," he whispered incredulously, "purchased the Subway? With what!"

"For the insignificant sum of a thousand dollars," was Tveet's smug answer. Then he proceeded to relate what had happened.

Forgotten, was the coffee in front of Mike Toby. All of his senses were concentrated on Tveet's story. Mike let out a long sigh as his companion finished.

"Sully," Mike began, shaking his head in simulated sorrow, "I don't know what to say. You were always a screwy sorta guy. No whiskey, cigarettes or any of the other things that make a man. Always afraid you was going to be taken. Even when you bought something, it was never what the salesman showed. It only proves that even the sharpest guy c'n be made. Not that it makes any difference now."

"Oh but it does, Mike. Look, the evidence." Tveet showed the stock certificates.

"Hey! These are real. An' they got your name on 'em."

"Of course they have!" Tveet retorted. "They *are* mine. And so is the Subway."

"All right, Sully, so you bought the Subway. What good is it? What're ya gonna do with it?"

"Ha! What am I going to do with it? I am now residing in it."

The birth of a great idea took place in the brain of Mike Toby at that instant.

"Say," he was suddenly beaming at Tveet, "ya know, I got a great little idea f'r us."

SULLY M. TVEET didn't like the sound of that 'us.' He knew Toby as of yore. And, as he remembered, too many of Toby's ideas ended in a wagon—Police Station bound.

His "huh?" held a fine edge of suspicion.

"Yup," Toby began to elaborate, "a swell idea. An' here's how it works. You got these shares, see. They prove you're the owner, the *landlord*. Right? Well, what's to stop ya from rentin' space in the Subway?"

Tveet hesitated, puzzling over what Toby had in his mind.

"Elaborate," he suggested. "Elucidate. Just what are you proposing I do?"

Toby grinned broadly. "An' it'll be a cinch! Look Sully. I know at least thirty guys ud pay a half a buck a week f'r a flop. An' there must be a hunnert more like 'em. Get it? Fifty, maybe seventy-five bucks a week f'r us. An' it don't cost us a thing."

Tveet took off the moth-eaten cap he wore and scratched in the thicket of grey hair beneath it.

"Yes," he said slowly, "a most advantageous idea. For Mike Toby. I'm afraid not Mike, I was not meant to be a flop-house keeper. But you have given me the germ of an idea."

He scrubbed at his lips with dirty, blunt-tipped fingers. His blue eyes rolled heavenward, as though in the dirt-grimed ceiling of the cafeteria, a message was written for only his eyes to see. His fingers moved down to his

chin as he said thoughtfully:

"Mike, you say you know thirty men who could use a flop? A permanent flop?"

Toby shook his head in silent agreement, his sharp little eyes gleaming brightly in anticipation.

"Good! It is now a little after ten. Do you think you could get those men together in Grant Park; behind the Institute by say, midnight?"

"Yeah, I think so. But why; what for?"

"That, my good friend, I will explain to all. See you at midnight then," Tveet said in a tone that put an end to further questioning.

Nor did Mike ask any other questions. He got off his stool, set the grease-stained rag that served as a cap, at a jauntier angle, and left.

TVEET found a couple of newspapers and read them through between two more cups of coffee. His timing was perfect. It was exactly eleven-thirty when he finished the second cup and the last page.

Mike had done well. Tveet saw, when he arrived at the meeting place. Mike had not only found the thirty he had mentioned, but several dozen more. It was a group which could best be described as the cream of the "flotsam and jetsam" crowd. Most of them needed a shave. All needed haircuts. Some few, the upper-crust, sported ragged overcoats.

Tveet pushed his way to the center of the mob, where Mike was answering questions put to him by the few who were interested enough to ask them. The rest were too beat-out to care what it was all about. The only reason they had come was because Mike had promised: "A free flop. Everybody welcome."

Tveet could see the harried expres-

sion on the sharp features of Toby. Shouldering his way forward, he reached Mike and said:

"That's fine Mikel! And now if you don't mind," he held up both hands and shouted, "All right men, your attention, please!"

Dull, apathetic faces turned his way. There wasn't even the saving quality of curiosity in those faces. They had no place to go. And perhaps there was a free flop. But they had no hope.

Tveet had found a hummock of ground, which permitted him to stand where he could be seen. Taking the stock certificates from his pocket, he waved them in the air and shouted:

"I have good news for every man here! Mike Toby can testify that what I say is true. *I have bought the Subway!* And do you know what I'm going to do with it? I am going to provide *free lodging* for every man here. Yes, and for your friends too. No more sleeping on park benches! No more lousy, bed-buggy, flop-beds! No more cops giving you the night stick! Yes friends. You are all welcome at the Subway. Sleep where you want and ride where you will. And at no cost to you."

He stopped and looked at the blank faces around him. For a second, he thought his message had not registered. Then one of them, the dirtiest, most ragged of the lot, lifted a tremulous voice and asked:

"Hey boss. Ya mean a guy like me kin flop f'r nix?"

"That's right, my friend," Tveet said softly.

"Well den, lead me to it."

A chorus of "me too's" filled the air at that. Then came the climax. Someone yelled, "the cops! Disappear!" and Tveet's startled eyes met—nothing but the outlines of the few barren trees of the park and the dark bulk of the In-

stitute. All those men—every one of them—had vanished. As though the very earth had swallowed them.

A voice shouted:

"Hey! Where'd they go?"

Another voice answered:

"Dunno, but there's the guy who was talkin'."

And Tveet turned frightened eyes to see a half-dozen policemen converging on him.

Then a voice; which seemed to come out of the air beside him, but which he recognized as Mike Toby's whispered:

"C'mon Sully, disappear."

The police were only yards away when Tveet tremulously asked:

"But how Mike?"

"Just think it, you big dope."

TVEET did as he was told. And there, a hundred yards away, he saw Mike and the rest, waiting for him. He made off in their direction, in a shambling knock-kneed run. Behind him he could hear the shouted, bewildered questions of the police, "But where'd he go?—where'd they all go?—what happened?—"

~~He had no time to listen to more.~~

Mike had him by an arm and was dragging him across the dry grass toward Michigan Boulevard. And, as they trotted after the rest, streaming across the boulevard, Mike whispered derisively:

"So *that* was your idea! Free room and board! Well, knowing you, it was what I expected. And I s'pose you got a little office all fixed up with fancy furniture and rugs and a couple a telephones."

"No," Tveet gasped, "but—perhaps—later—we—will—have."

Mike did a double-take at that.

"We?"

"Of course, Mike. I have had you in mind from the very start."

Mike's voice still held irony, but

Tveet could see he was pleased.

"So I am goin' ta help you play nurse-maid to a gang of broken down bums? That's pretty good! What'll we call it? The Subway Mansion f'r Mooches and Mahkies?"

"Do not jest, Mike. There is room for several hundred men. There aren't the conveniences at present, which make a home, but I think I know how to get them."

Mike stopped short. His sharp little chin with its whiskers sticking out like the quills of a porcupine, was a pugnacious exclamation point.

"Aarh!" he grunted softly and spat at the gutter. "F'r the love a—"

Tveet had turned and was regarding him worriedly. But whatever Mike had thought of saying, remained unsaid. The cocky little man caught up with Tveet and they proceeded to the nearest Subway entrance in silence.

The ragged group clustered around the two men and lethargically waited for further developments. But Tveet stood silent, for once, his eyes bent on his badly scuffed shoes. Finally Mike asked harshly:

"What're we waitin' for? Let's get goin'. I'm cold and these guys ain't any better off!"

There was an odd look of misery in Tveet's eyes. He had remembered the cashier at the other entrance and he didn't want the same thing to happen here. He plucked at Mike's sleeve and took him aside to whisper of his fears.

Mike looked pityingly at him and said:

"Why you big goon! Ya let something like that worry ya'. I can just see ya' if somethin' big comes up." He shook his head in disgust. "It's a good thing," he continued, "that I'm here ta help ya'. C'mon, I'll show ya' how we do it."

With that he stepped to the head of

the entrance and said:

"Okay boys, let's go."

TVEET brought up the rear.

They reached the turnstiles in a group. Mike walked up to the cashier, after calling Tveet to his side.

"Meet the new owner of this joint," he said to the lantern jawed man behind the barred-glass window.

"Huh?" the cashier gasped.

"Yeah," Mike continued calmly, hauling Tveet up close so the cashier could see him. "Your new boss, Sully M. Tveet."

The cashier looked with dazed interest on the flushed, hang-dog expression of Tveet and said in a hushed whisper:

"No!"

"Yup," replied Mike. "Well, that's settled, Sully, so let's get cuttin'."

Mike, satisfied that he had done all that should have been done, thrust his thighs against the turnstile. But it wouldn't turn!

"What'sa matter, wise guy?" he snarled to the cashier.

"Oh nothin'," the cashier replied airily, "except you and my boss fergot ta drop your dimes."

"Dimes?" Mike's voice was a horrified squeak. "From us? Brother, you'll have ta whistle f'r those!"

The cashier was no longer amused.

"So I gotta whistle, do I? Well I will! An' it won't be f'r dimes either," he gritted harshly. "Scram you bums before I whistle f'r the cops!"

Mike's lips curled in amused contempt. "Okay wise guy," he said softly, "you asked for it." Then he turned to the group waiting at the turnstiles and yelled, "over those things, guys. An' when ya get downstairs, do a fade out."

It was the signal they had been waiting for. One by one they stepped over the barriers and ran for the stairs. The

ticket agent took one horrified look and made a frantic grab for the phone. As Tveet went over the turnstile after his pugnacious little friend, he heard the bellowing voice of the agent, "Quick! Send some cops over. A gang of bums are on the loose here!"

He had little time to hear more, for Mike's strident voice was commanding him to: "Get goin', before the cops get here!"

There was no one but Mike on the train platform, when he got there. He looked bewilderedly about for the rest.

"Oh, come on stupid," Mike said in exasperation, as he slid over the platform onto the tracks. "Don't stand there like that. They're here."

"Wh-where?" quavered Tveet.

"Here! Damn it! Do that fade-out an' you'll see 'em."

Tveet again did as he was told—and there they were—in all their ragged, bedraggled glory. He sighed in relief and wonder. This business of "now you see 'em, now you don't," was puzzling in the extreme. But he had no time to figure it out just then. There were some fifty men waiting for him to keep a promise.

He regained some of the manner and composure he had lost at the ticket agent's window.

"Good!" he exclaimed in that unctiously smooth voice. "Good! Now that we are all here, let me show you to your quarters."

And, after stepping to the head of the group, he started off down the single track. As they would pass each embrasure in the concrete, he would tell one of the group: "here, my good man, is your quarters. A pleasant rest to you."

FINALLY, near Clybourn Avenue, there was only Mike and himself left. Mike was thoroughly disgusted.

"Look Sully," he said pausing, "where are you takin' us? I'm pooped out now."

"Just around this curve here, Mike, and I will show you our quarters. And I am sure you will be quite pleased with them."

"Yeah, yeah. Never mind the con. Just bring me to a bed and let me flop."

They passed the curve Tveet mentioned, and Mike saw it. A wooden shack had been erected at the end of the dividing wall, where the single tracks converged to run side by side.

"Ah," said Tveet in satisfaction, "there it is; our home and office."

It was obviously just a shack, which had been used during the Subway's construction, as headquarters for the line foreman and timekeeper. Now it was apparently being used as a store-room. The door had no lock and they walked in. Tveet pulled the chain on the solitary electric connection and looked around with interest.

Pickaxes, spades and sledges were scattered around on the concrete floor. An air-hammer, wound around with its rubber hosing, rested against a wall. A small table with a telephone was the only piece of furniture.

If Tveet was disappointed, his voice didn't show it.

"How do you like it?"

He looked at Mike and hastily added:

"Yes, it is cluttered up with these tools. But a half hour's work will remove them."

"Ya' know, Sully?" said Mike, after he had nosed around the shack for a while. "I think both you and your idea stink."

THE phone's ring sounded loud in the room. Jim McCauley looked at the sodden tip of the cigarette and flipped it across the room. Then he

spat in the general direction of the cuspidor beside his desk. Then he looked at the electric clock on the wall to his right. It was exactly four in the morning. He yawned widely, showing snuff-stained, crooked teeth.

Finally, as though he had first become aware of its insistent command, he lifted the receiver from the cradle.

"Randloph," he said brusquely. "McCauley on."

He leaned back in the swivel chair, the phone cradled close to his shoulder. He listened with half a mind, the other half speculating on the long shot he was going to get the following afternoon.

"Yeah," he said, disinterestedly checking off the trouble points, "escalator running in reverse; State—Van Buren. Right—Escalator, reverse; State—Madison. Right—Escalator, reverse; State—and say, what goes with all this?"

His feet came off the desk in a hurry. He was all attention now.

"Yeah . . . yeah . . . but how did they all go on the bum at one time . . . oh I see . . . sure I've got enough men to cover . . . yep, leaving now . . . s'long."

He hung up; his free hand scratching puzzledly at the bald spot on his head.

"That's damn strange," he thought, as he buttoned his jacket. "Don't even make sense. How the hell can those escalators go in reverse?"

He shrugged his shoulders and went out to call his crew together.

MIKE TOBY took another bite out of the sandwich and yelled:

"C'mon in!"

The door opened and a figure slid in. It was a wisp of a man, bundled in clothes a half dozen sizes too large for the tiny frame. The voice of the man, when he spoke, matched the figure.

Tiny and quavering. It beat on the air with frightened, helpless accents.

"Please, Mr. Toby. Is Mr. Tveet here?"

"S'matter? Ya blind?" Mike answered, spitting fragments of bread and ham with each word. "Can't Ya' see he ain't here?" And, as the little man looked helplessly about, shifting from one foot to another in his embarrassment, Mike demanded:

"Well! What's *your* trouble? As though there was anything else here."

"Can't sleep," the other whispered.

"Can't sleep? What's a matter? Floor too hard?"

"Oh, no sir. It's those lights: the colored ones. They keep blinking all night long."

"Well, turn 'em off!"

"I don't know how, sir."

"H'm," said Mike, taking the last of the sandwich in his mouth, "more trouble. One night it's too cold. Then the trains make too much noise. Then we get that drunken screw-ball, 'Bull' Karney for a customer. And now you. Hell! And I was so happy, just pickin' my flop wherever I happen to be. Oh well!" he sighed wearily and got off the table where he'd been taking his ease, "see if you c'n find Bull and bring him here."

"Yessir," the little man whispered and scurried out. Nor did Mike have long to wait for his return.

The door was literally flung inward and the little man came in preceded by Bull Karney.

Karney wasn't tall but he was wide, with huge shoulders and a thick neck. This thickness extended even to his face. He had a huge nose, broad-nos-triled and heavy. His round, heavy jowled face was crowned by an un-combed mop of brick-red hair. His voice was a bellow.

"Well here I am, ya' skinny, flea-bit

runt!"

"Yes, I see y'are. And drunk as usual," replied Mike softly.

"An' whassa matter wit' that?"

"Nothin'. Except I got a job f'r ya'. D'ya think ya' c'n stop foolin' with the escalators long enough to do this?"

"Ah nuts! Thet 'escie' gives me a kick. Gees! All ya' gotta do is throw that little trip on the gear an' it goes reverse. Ho! I got six a' the boys spottin' for me down at State and Madison, an' when the escie's got a full load, dey gimme the high sign an' I throw 'er in reverse. Gees! Do the people get scared!"

He threw back his head and burst into a bellow of laughter. Mike snorted and said:

"Ve-ry funny. Now that the comedy is over let's get serious. I gotta complaint. The signal lights are causin' this guy ta lose sleep. Well ya' know Tveet's orders. 'Anythin' ya' don't like, let us know. We'll make it right!"

"Ya' mean dem red, green an' yella lights?"

Mike nodded his head.

"It's a cinch, Mike. Dem tings are easy ta knock off. Brother," he turned to the little man standing silently beside him, "go on back ta bed. Dey won't bother ya' tonight."

JIM McCAULEY yanked the phone from the cradle.

"Yeah," he barked savagely, "Randolph—McCauley on. Wh-at! No, not again. . . . But—but—but Mister Magnussen, I've just pulled men off that . . ." his eyes narrowed and his lips paled in sudden anger as he listened. "Just a moment, sir," he said in a quiet, controlled voice. "I've got three crews. They've only got two legs and arms and for the past three nights they've been working their tails off jumpin' from one spot to another . . ."

Sure, what the hell d'ya think they've been doing, playing gin-rummy? . . . Okay, sir," he said resignedly, "I'll send 'em out again," and slammed the phone on its cradle.

He looked at the clock on the wall. His lips formed silent words:

"Six o'clock. Three calls since midnight. I'll be damned glad when this night ends."

He looked down at the report sheets spread out before him. His shoulders sagged helplessly.

"What the devil can we do? They've got Pinkerton men in all the control rooms and still these things happen."

Irritably he thrust the papers aside and set himself to wait for the men to come in.

It was exactly eight when he checked out the last foreman. The day man had come in and was looking over the reports of the night before. He clapped a sympathetic hand on McCauley's shoulder and said:

"What the hell, Jim! You've just had a tough run of luck, that's all. Don't take it so hard."

McCauley slipped on his overcoat, made the muffler snug against his throat and opened the door. He turned, with his hand on the knob, and said:

"I'm not sure about that, Al. I think there's something very funny going on; and I'm going to run it down. And you can bet your last buck on that!"

Al shook his head slowly, as the burly figure of the night man left.

"Too bad," he whispered. "I think Mc's gettin' old. Old—or nutty."

IRENE McCAULEY turned a flushed and lovely face away from the frying pork chops, when she heard footsteps in the kitchen. Her voice, huskily tender, called a greeting to her father as he walked to the sink for a

glass of water.

"Hello darling," she said. "Chops'll be done in a second. Better wash. I'll water the plant."

It was McCauley's unfailing custom to water a plant he had on the kitchen window sill, the moment he came in. The scene had never varied in the three years since he had bought it. There had always been her greeting and suggestion to wash first and his unfailing reply, "first the plant, Rene, then wash."

This morning he broke the custom. He had been holding the glass of water in his hand when she spoke. His eyes stared emptily at the plant. Placing the glass of water back on the sink, he said:

"Um'hm. Yep. I'll be down in a few seconds, dear."

He turned and started to leave and was confronted by Irene. She took him by the arm and led him to the table.

"All right, Dad," she said, as she removed the tea apron she was wearing. "You can stop trying to keep that secret. Y'know," she turned back to the stove and began to bring him his meal, "I'm not a reporter because of my looks. Only the other day the editor paid me the compliment of saying I had a nose for news."

She patted her father's bald spot and pouring a cup of coffee for herself, sat down at the table opposite him.

"Some compliment," McCauley grunted, as he started in on the breaded pork chops. "A nose as pretty as yours deserves better compliments."

He looked slyly over his forkful of food and grinned when he saw the wave of color mount from her throat to her forehead.

"Aha," he laughed, "so you have . . ."

"Never mind my nose, pops," she stopped him. "Give with what's bothering you."

He sobered at that. Savagely stab-

bing at a piece of chop, he launched into his troubles.

"Hm-m, h'm," she kept stirring at the already sweetened coffee. "And you say there has never been any person found tampering with the switches or controls?"

"That isn't what's bothering me, Rene. Here's what gets me. The company's put watchmen in those rooms. They're on duty all night long. Yet things go wrong on the line; things which are controlled from those rooms. And the only way anyone can tamper with signal switches is to go into a control room and turn 'em off!"

"Oh now, dad! That's ridiculous," she cried. Then she saw her words had hurt him and she realized that what she had said was what everyone else had probably told him.

She ran around to him and putting her arms around his neck, whispered loving things in his ear. But when she faced him again, she still saw the look of bewilderment in his eyes.

"Now listen dad," she began and then she saw the clock. "Oh my! This little gal's gotta dash," she cried breathlessly. "Don't worry about it anymore. I've got an idea, dad. Tell you 'bout it later. 'Bye dear." And giving him a hasty kiss on his forehead, she was off.

IRENE McCAULEY worked for the Daily Chronicle, considered to be the finest paper in Chicago. She had been hired as a fashion expert, assistant to the Society Editor. But she had ideas of her own. Ideas about having her own column. Several interesting items she had turned up had made the City Editor look with approval in her direction. But there was a fly in the ointment. Lawrence Chalmers!

He was the Special Features man. As such, he ran a daily column of his

own. And it was the paper's policy to have only *one* such column. She didn't mind that. It was Chalmers himself who irked her. The whole six feet of his healthy strong body; his handsome face, smiling eyes, white teeth, crisply curling black hair; the casual debonair manner he wore, so natural and real.

"Damn! If only he weren't such a good reporter," was her thought, as she pushed open the swinging door which led to the offices of the Chronicle and almost knocked down the person about whom she was thinking.

"Well," Chalmers grinned when he saw who it was, "if it isn't My Girl Friday, Sunday, Monday and Always."

She paused and looked up at him, stony-eyed.

"Not your girl ever; you big—" she stormed through taut lips.

"Uh, uh," he admonished, still grinning, "mustn't! Or papa won't give another tip."

He scored there and knew it. Only the other day he had given her a tip on a news item which, when the editor had read it, had given her a verbal pat on the back.

"Don't play big-hearted with me," she said scornfully. "You had that political shindig at the Morrison to cover. Naturally you couldn't bother with small stuff." Yet even as she said it, she knew it wasn't so. He could have covered both.

The grin had disappeared from his lips.

"I didn't mean it that way, Irene," he said. "I thought that stuff was up your alley. And that you could do a better job on it than I. Sorry you feel that way."

He started to leave and felt her fingers on his sleeve.

"Going for coffee, Larry?" she asked in a small voice.

He nodded.

"Mind if I go along?"

He grinned boyishly. "Heck no! You know that'd be both honor and pleasure."

"And business!" she reminded him primly.

THEY sat across from each other in a little booth in the lobby drug-store.

"Larry," she began, after she had taken a last puff at her cigarette, "I want you to know I appreciate what you did." And as he began to deny he had done anything, she stopped him and continued, "no, wait. I'm not kidding myself. You not only gave me the lead, you also told me what angle to play. Well, I'm going to repay you." And she related what her father had told her.

He sat silent for so long, his eyes intent on the coffee cup, that she thought he had fallen asleep.

"Well don't just sit there!" she said angrily, "Say something! What d'you think of it?"

He looked up, grinned and said:

"Dunno. What am I supposed to think? Ghosts?"

"Oh don't be childish, Larry. Look! Here we've got the Subway; Chicago's pride and joy! And strange things happen in it. Don't you think the public'll be interested?"

He looked at her for a long moment. "You're such a beautiful brat," he said.

The remark made color come in soft waves across her face. "Oh, go to the devil," she said, as she rose and started to slide out of the booth. "I should have known better than to have come to you!"

"Wait a minute!" he reached out and held her wrist. "My God! How you fly off the handle! I got it—what you were driving at. And I'm figuring out the news value. Just hold still for

a minute."

She sat down again and watched him doodle on the white table top, with a blunt tipped finger. Finally, he looked up, grinned and said:

"How's about a date tonight? A date to ride the Subway?"

She also grinned in sudden good humor. He *was* going to take her tip!

"It's a date," she said.

TWO people, a tall young man in a dark overcoat and a pretty girl in a polo coat, sat on a bench on the platform of the State-Madison Subway stop.

They sat silent for the most part, speaking only now and then, and only remarks about the time. They had been there since midnight; three hours before. Their bench was only a few feet removed from an escalator, which seemed to hold a peculiar fascination for them, as though it were something out of this world.

The man pulled a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and selecting two, lighted them. He offered one to the girl and said:

"Well, René, it looks as though we have waited in vain."

She sighed softly in resignation and said, more to herself, than to him:

"Yes it does. Still—I'm sure Dad was—oh well, let's go Larry. Looks like you're right."

She got up and moved off to the escalator. He followed and got on the first step with her. They were halfway to the top when it happened. The upward motion stopped and began to move downward.

She gave voice to a low cry of fright and grabbed Chalmers' coat. He placed his hand over hers and watched the steel steps slide under the concrete. They were almost at the bottom when it reversed its motion again and started

upward. But now the speed was accelerated and when it stopped, almost at the top, it was with a jolting suddenness that made them clutch frantically at the handrails. Again it began to move downward and from far off, it seemed, there came a rollicking laughter.

"Rene! When we hit bottom, jump!" Chalmers cried, taking her hand in his.

When they turned, after leaping from the escalator, they were amazed to see it had resumed its normal pace and in the proper direction.

Chalmers shook his head in bewilderment.

"It's almost as though the damned thing had been waiting for us to get on," he said.

"Larry! Larry!" Irene said excitedly. "Did you hear it?"

"Huh?"

"The laugh! Somebody was laughing all the while we were going up!"

His eyes pinched together in a frown.

"Say! That's right. But—we were the only ones on the escalator. In fast," he said with puzzled emphasis, "we are the only ones *here!*"

They stared silently at each other for a moment, then as one they both exclaimed:

"Dad!"

"Your father!"

"Come on!" She took his hand and they started hurriedly toward a train which had just pulled in. "We'll get off at Randolph. I know how to get dad."

JIM McCAULEY was just coming out of his office, when they arrived.

"H'llo. What're you doing here?" he asked Rene.

"Listen dad! If you're going to State and Madison; we've just come from there, and the escalator's going in reverse."

"Yes sir," Larry said, when she stopped. "And if you don't mind, I'd like to go along with you and see, well, what there is to see."

"It's all right with me Mister, er..."

"Chalmers, dad. Larry Chalmers."

"Oh yes," McCauley said. "Rene's told me about you."

They were walking toward the crew car which was waiting for McCauley.

"Good or bad, sir?" asked Chalmers.

"Well . . ." McCauley drawled and grinned.

"Uh huh, I get it," said Chalmers grimly.

"Get what?" said Irene.

"Hey! Where do you think you're going?" asked McCauley. They had started to enter the train and Irene had started to follow them in.

"With you!" she calmly announced.

"You can't do that," her father said.

"It's against company rules."

"Then company rules are going to be broken," she replied grimly.

Her father took one look at the stubborn set of her jaw and gave in. He knew better than to argue with her when she had her mind made up to do something.

"And as for you, Mister Chalmers," she began when they sat down, "what was it that you got?"

Chalmers looked at her, felt his face grow warm in embarrassment and looked away again without saying anything.

McCauley took them back to the station from which they had just come. The escalator was behaving normally again. McCauley stood there for a moment, watching the steps moving upward, and said:

"That's the way it goes. We get here and everything is normal. The signal lights, the same way." He sighed wearily, shrugged and looked at the steps in silence.

"Listen Mr. McCauley," Chalmers said, "I've got an idea. What I'm going to do won't seem to make sense. But I think it'll work. Read my column tomorrow!"

IRENE McCAULEY walked into Larry Chalmers' office, threw a newspaper on his desk and said furiously:

"Is-that-your-idea-of-something-funny?"

He looked at her, one eyebrow cocked quizzically.

"Well, what's wrong with it?"

"What's wrong with it, he asks," she cried. "Here let me read it!

"'Ghosts Get The Subway's Goat. A series of strange happenings in our newest civic pride, the Subway, have punctured the complacent attitudes of Company officials. It seems, this columnist has learned, there are ghosts, or more correctly, *Poltergeists*, haunting the Subway. These Gremlins of the underground are turning the few remaining hairs of the Company president, J. Warren Beckwith, grey with their pranks. Escalators go up instead of down. Signal lights go out for no earthly reasons. Turnstiles turn without the need of inserting the usual dime. These and other peculiar occurrences are causing questions to be asked in high places. Lifted eyebrows and hushed voices ask, "Is the Subway haunted?" and the Gremlins grin, and go on playing their pranks. Of course, being Gremlins, they do not realize that a signal light going dark may cause a train wreck. Or an escalator reversing its direction can cause serious accidents. No, Gremlins wouldn't know that. But this columnist thinks it only fair to warn the public to beware the Subway Gremlins!'"

She stopped reading and glared at him.

When he spoke his voice held a touch of irony.

"So you're a newspaperwoman! And you don't get what I'm driving at. I suppose you're angry because you think I'm taking what your father and you told me and am twisting it up into a humor yarn."

He could see his shot went home. He shook his head.

"No! You're all wrong. Don't you get it? There aren't any ghosts! Somebody, or *bodies* are doing these things. They've been pretty smart so far and haven't been caught. What I want this article to do is pour oil on the fire of their ego. I'm *telling them* they're clever! Now, maybe, they'll become a little careless and overstep their luck. I've arranged with the general manager to be put to work under your dad. Extra guards have been placed on duty. Every measure of—"

"You don't have to go on, Larry," she broke in. "As usual, I flew off the handle. Darn!" she exclaimed vehemently. "Why can't I use my head and see things in the proper light?"

"That and other things," Chalmers said looking at her.

SULLY M. TVEET held up a fat-palmed hand.

"All right men," he began, "your attention, please!"

The seventy odd men, who had gathered in Grant Park at his request, became silent. A cold, biting wind came in from off the lake and made many of them pull their torn and threadbare coats close.

"I asked Mike Toby to call this special meeting today, because I have something of importance to tell you."

He cleared his throat and pulled his pants higher in an attempt to cover the small area of shirting which his vest didn't cover. Then he continued:

"During the last few days, I have received a number of complaints about conditions in the Subway. It seems that the trains operating late at night are making so much noise, that sleep is impossible."

His eyebrows were grey around his somewhat empty, large eyes. And his lips formed a pouting circle, as though he had sucked on a sour lemon.

"Well, gentlemen, as the owner of the Subway, I give you my pledge that there will be no further cause for complaints. I will take steps this very afternoon, to eliminate that condition."

Scattered cheers broke out at this announcement. He held up his hand again for silence.

"Furthermore, I have certain ideas about your comfort, which I will soon put into effect. I am bound to make the Subway a model home for you men." He paused again. It was an effect he liked. He saw himself as a benefactor to a suffering humanity. He posed there for a second, and as the crowd began to break up, he turned to Mike.

"Mike," he said somewhat sadly, "sometimes I wonder if it's worth the trouble I'm taking. Perhaps I ought to give it up as a bad job and assume my proper duties as the owner—"

"Ah shut up," snarled Toby. "An' let's get to a phone booth so's you c'n make that call."

"Yes of course, Mike," Tveet replied hastily.

"**N**OW don't ferget," Mike said warningly, "You're the Mayor. So put it on thick."

Tveet nodded gravely in understanding and closed the door of the phone booth. He dialed a number and hummed a little tune while he waited for his connection. The phone made a clicking sound and a woman's voice

tickled his ear.

"Ah yes," he said. "Let me speak to Mister Neely please. . . . My good woman, do you know who this is? . . . This is Mayor Riley! . . . Very well. . . . Hello Neely? . . . This is Mayor Riley. I have some work for your firm, sir. My engineers have informed me of certain necessary changes which must be effected in the Subway. They have advised me that the Clyborn tunnel must be closed for a while. . . . Yes, I know that Neely, but I think I am the better judge of that. . . . Of course I will take full responsibility. . . . I want your men to start work tomorrow morning. . . . About two will be just right. . . . Good, good. And thanks for your co-operation. Good day sir."

He was beaming with self-satisfaction when he stepped from the phone booth. Mike wasted no time in puncturing his balloon of complacency.

"Okay, so ya' did it. Well don't be so cocky. It was my idea in the first place. The minute I heard the Mayor's voice on the radio, I knew you'd be a ringer for'm. Let's keep our finger crossed that somebody doesn't call the Mayor's office."

"Come, come, Mike. Don't be so pessimistic. I told you it would be simple. Really, Mike, you underestimate my abilities."

A sour look from the cocky little Toby was all the answer he got.

MCCAULEY pounced on the phone before it had rung twice. Larry Chalmers hung his head as close to the receiver, as he could get it. Brusquely McCauley said:

"Yeah, go on . . . Clyborn tunnel . . . Say what the hell are you talking about? . . . Slow down will you, Harris. Now what are you saying." He repeated slowly after the voice, "the

Neely Company are starting to seal up the Clyborn entrance to the—" McCauley's voice trailed off.

"What's wrong, sir?" Chalmers asked.

McCauley was a study in bewilderment. The phone dangled from his finger tips. Stuttering sounds came from it.

"They're sealing up the Clyborn exit to the tunnel," McCauley answered in a low voice, "the Mayor ordered it, according to Harris."

"What for?"

"I don't know! That was Harris, the Superintendent. He said Neely's outfit's down there and they're starting to work."

"Well, what about the service?"

"There isn't any. All trains will use the elevated until further."

"Sounds fishy to me. Let's get out there sir, and see what's going on."

There was quite a crowd of rubberneckers, when Chalmers and McCauley arrived on the crew car. Gaps had been opened in the fences to let the equipment of the Construction Company in.

Chalmers was quick to note an odd fact—the large number of bums present. They were in a body, near one of the large cement mixers. Then he noticed another strange thing. They seemed to be in extraordinary good humor.

That was a note wrong note. In his early reporting days, Chalmers had made a name for himself by doing local color articles. The Madison and Van Buren Street districts had been the contributing factors. He knew the down-and-outer and all his habits. And laughter was something in which they seldom indulged.

Two of these characters drew his immediate attention. One was a thick-

bodied, bull necked figure with the biggest, broadest nose Chalmers had ever seen. In spite of the cold, he wore only a sweater over his shirt. The other, who hung so close he looked like a foreshortened shadow, was a tiny figure in shabby clothes, which were sizes too large in every way. He had a face whose only characteristic was a constant fear. The thick nosed one was saying, as Chalmers strolled up:

"Dat Sully! He's a card! Lookit all dis. Just 'cause some guys can't sleep." He bellowed in sudden laughter. The shadow of a smile appeared for a bare instant on the little man's lips and was gone.

But Chalmers had eyes and ears only for the bigger man. That laugh! He'd heard it before. When Irene and he were on the escalator!

UNEXPECTEDLY, the little man spoke.

"Really, Bull," he said in a low voice, "you shouldn't laugh at Sully. This is evidence of a good heart and a kindly disposition."

Bull didn't like that.

"Nuts!" he said. "That hunk a cheese is all hot air. Look at 'im up there with Mike. Struttin' around like he owned the joint."

Chalmers looked to where Bull had pointed. Although there were two of them, he knew which was the one called Sully. Although his eyes were centered on the odd figure in the Norfolk jacket, tight trousers and purple shirt, his ears were intent on the conversation of the two men beside him.

"Well, he does," the little man said.

"Yah. But who runs it? Mike! Who is it tells him what t'do? Mike. An' I don't trust that guy!"

"Why, Bull?" the little man asked.

"Listen," Bull said harshly. "I know

that guy from the old days. He was a rat then an' there's no reason he's changed now."

"Perhaps something is going to happen that will alter that situation," the little man replied.

"Y'know," said Bull after a pause, "you're a funny guy Tiny. One minute ya' act like you're afraid of your own shadow: next minute you're tellin' me where ta head off." He shook his head in silent wonder at the complexity of the one he called Tiny.

But Chalmers had lost interest in the two. Something was going on at the tunnel head. McCauley was with a tall, slender man, who, in his bearing and manner, was obviously a company executive.

"Don't be childish, McCauley," the tall man was saying, as Chalmers came up. "It's ridiculous to think Neely would do this on his own initiative. As to *why* it's being done, Neely explained. The city engineers have found certain faults which are to be corrected. When they—"

"Just a minute," McCauley broke in stubbornly. "There isn't a damn thing wrong with *anything*, and I think all this is a practical joke. So I'm going to find out what all this is about. Right Now!" He turned and seeing Chalmers, said, "Coming, Larry?"

Chalmers said: "Right with you, sir."

As they turned to leave, the tall man stopped them with a word:

"Wait!"

They turned and saw his face was pale with anger. "What are you going to do, McCauley?"

"Call the Mayor and find out if he issued that order," McCauley replied.

"Very well," said the other. "But remember this! You'll have to take the consequences if you are wrong!"

McCAULEY jerked his head in agreement and left, with Chalmers in tow. The reporter related the conversation he had overheard between Bull and Tiny but McCauley was too wrapped up in his own thoughts to pay much attention.

Oddly enough, it was Chalmers who had to do all the calling, when they reached McCauley's office. When he got the Mayor's private secretary on the line, it didn't take more than a few seconds to prove McCauley was right. "No such order has been issued from the Mayor's office," was what the secretary said.

McCauley was pleased as punch.

"What'll happen now?" he asked.

"H'm. In about ten minutes there'll be hell to pay. And probably some head'll fall. But not yours, sir. You oughta rate a promotion out of this."

McCauley smiled shyly. Then he remembered that Chalmers had tried to tell him something.

"Say, Larry," he said, "what was it you were trying to tell me a while ago? Guess I wasn't paying any attention."

Again Chalmers told him.

"So! Well, that explains the lights, who called Neely, and everything else. But where are they hiding? I can't think of any place they could stay, except in those cut-outs in the concrete. And then they'd have to sleep standing up, it's so narrow."

Chalmers shrugged his shoulders, stifled an unexpected yawn and realized he still had a column to do. He bade McCauley good night and left.

He walked to the paper, a matter of six blocks, and plotted out his column on the way down. Not that it took much plotting. He knew just what he was going to write.

"Let's see now," he thought it out, "I'll write the whole thing in a kidding

vein; rib the City Fathers and the Neely outfit and give McCauley a line of credit for being the only one to show any common sense in the matter."

He looked up suddenly. Thick snowflakes were whirling down from the blackness above and were settling coldly and damply on his face.

"Looks like we're going to have our first big snowfall of the year," was his thought, as he entered the lobby of the newspaper building.

IRENE praised his column to the skies when she saw him later that morning.

"Larry," she said, "your column—it was swell—and thanks for giving dad a plug."

Chalmers looked at the lovely, flushed and excited face and knew what he wanted to do. But what he said, wasn't what was in his mind:

"Ready for another night on the Subway?"

"Uh huh!"

"Okay then. Pick you up at eight."

"I'll be waiting."

It was still snowing when they arrived at the State-Madison entrance. ~~Countless feet had churned the white-~~ness into a dirty gray slush, which made sucking, squelching sounds under their feet. A snow plow churned past on the street car line, sending out streamers of snow from its whirling brushes. The stores were open late and the Subway entrance, at that station, was jammed with shoppers on their way home.

They watched the crowd shoving their way down the stairs and Chalmers said:

"What say Rene? It's too crowded; let's take a walk."

She took hold of his arm for an answer and they started south on State. He turned west on Van Buren and

said:

"You see a good bit of life down here that you'll never see elsewhere. For instance," he had stopped her before a pawn shop window, "here in this window is enough material for a hundred stories."

She nodded soberly, knowing what he meant.

"Look!" he went on. "That guitar hanging in the corner. There's plot enough in that to—"

She looked up at him and wondered why he had suddenly stopped talking. She saw he was no longer interested in the guitar but was staring absorbedly into the interior of the pawnshop. She followed his gaze and saw two people inside. One a tall man, dressed in a Norfolk jacket, tight trousers, purple shirt and the most absurd of plaid caps on his uncombed grey hair, was talking to the other, whose features held something horselike in them. Then something crossed her line of vision. It was Chalmers. He was going inside. Unhesitatingly, she followed.

The tall one was saying:

"So you see Harry, what a wonderful thing happened that night. Of course there are a number of things which we must do yet. My friend, Mike Toby, has ideas about that though, which, when we carry them out, will make it a haven of rest for the poor."

THE sound of the door, opening, made Harry the Hock look to see who had come in. At sight of Chalmers and Irene, he walked away from Sully Tveet. And Tveet, seeing Harry had customers, decided to leave.

"Well," he said as he walked past Harry and the others, "must be off to the office. We busy executives, you know—" He gave a self-satisfied little chuckle at the end, and walked out.

"What a character," said Harry aloud. Then turning back to Chalmers and the girl said:

"Can I help you, sir?"

"You bet! My name is Chalmers. I work for the Chronicle."

"Yes," said Harry scenting something unusual in Chalmers' manner.

"Well, frankly, I'm not here to buy anything. But I saw that man in here and I came in to ask some questions."

"Ask away mister. I'll full of answers."

"Fine! Just who is that man and what does he do?"

"Sully?" Harry laughed aloud, and began to explain.

"Wait a minute," said Chalmers. "You mean he actually believes he bought the Subway?"

Harry smiled and nodded, knowing he hadn't told what Tveet paid for it or to whom.

"Maybe you don't know it mister, but that deal has caused a lot of trouble."

"How d'ya mean?"

"Chalmers told what was going on." Harry whistled in surprise.

"Then the goof wasn't kidding. Holy smoke! You gotta stop 'im!" Harry suddenly shouted.

"Why?"

"Because he was telling me his partner has a plan to make the trains stop running so those bums can get some sleep."

"Did he say where he was going?"

"Yeah! Down the street to the Chicago Coffee Shop. It's on Van Buren, near Clark."

"Let's go, honey," Chalmers said, turning to Irene. She was standing, biting her lower lip with small, white teeth. A far-away look was in her eyes.

Chalmers had to call her again before she heard him.

"Y'know, Larry," she said as they

walked toward Clark Street, "I'd have sworn I've seen that Tveet somewhere before. And not so long ago, either. But where—" she shrugged her shoulders in resignation.

"Ah!" Chalmers sighed in relief when they arrived at the coffee shop. "There he is."

TVEET was sitting at the bar. The cup of coffee in front of him threw warm breaths of vapor into the smoky air. Chalmers and the girl walked in.

After he had called the beer-paunched, dirty aproned waiter over and ordered "two straight ups," he approached Tveet.

"Pardon me, sir," he said, tapping him on the shoulder. "May I have a word with you?"

Tveet's prominent blue eyes made a careful survey of the handsome young face confronting him. Satisfied with what he saw, Tveet replied:

"Of course. May I offer some refreshment?" He motioned toward the coffee.

"No thank you," replied Chalmers. "Will you sit with us?"

Tveet looked to where the reporter was pointing and on seeing the girl, nodded agreeably.

"My name is Wilton, sir. James Wilton. And this is Miss La Rue," Chalmers said by way of introduction.

Tveet's bow of acknowledgement was so low he lost his cap. When he straightened, an extra two inches of purple shirt showed between vest and trousers. He was a ludicrous, yet pathetic figure, as he attempted to set his cap straight, shake Chalmers hand, and lift his trousers, all at one time.

"Mister Tveet," Chalmers began after they were seated, "I am," he looked around in a conspiratorial manner and lowered his voice, "a-a- representative of New York interests. Interests

which have to do with the Subway."

Tveet's face brightened. So! Already they had heard of Sully M. Tveet, the Chicago Subway tycoon. And they had sent this Wilton down to, perhaps make him an offer for his interest. He would show them where he stood!

"I'm sorry, sir," he said before Chalmers could continue. "But if you have come to make an offer for my holdings, I am afraid your employers have sent you on a hopeless quest. You see," he went on to explain, "I am going to use the Subway—"

"Exactly!" Chalmers broke in, "You are going to use the Subway! That is the point! My interests question your right."

Tveet's indignation was so great, he looked as though he were going to have an apoplectic seizure. He thrust his hand into his jacket pocket and pulled out the stock certificates.

"Here, sir," he bellowed, "here is the proof!"

Chalmers took the certificates and made a pretense of reading them.

"So!" he said at last. "Just as we thought! Mister Tveet, you have been bilked. These are not genuine."

"Not—genuine?" gasped Tveet.

"Of course not! The Subway shares are not sold on open market. And if you bought them from a private individual, where is the title of transfer?"

ALL this was so much Greek to Tveet. There was such a look of hopeless misery on his face, that Chalmers nearly laughed.

"How much did you pay for these?" he asked.

He whistled in surprise and indignation, when Tveet gave him the figure. Then, taking Tveet by an arm, he said:

"Come on, we'll go to this sharper and straighten this out." And without

waiting for an answer, he hustled him through the door.

As Tveet led them to the pawnshop, Irene dropped her purse. When she came in, Tveet was standing alone near the door. His face drooped with self-pity. Chalmers and Harry were arguing at the far end.

"L—Larry!" she gasped, clutching him by the hand.

"Just a minute, hon," he said, not looking at her. "I just want to tell this cheap crook a couple of things."

"Larry, please!" she pulled at his sleeve, forcing him to look at her.

When he saw her wide, panic-stricken eyes, saw the terror on her face; her lips quivering in fright, he forgot all about the pawnbroker.

"What's wrong, honey," he asked.

She tried to answer but no words came out. He shook her quickly. "Pull yourself together, Rene!" And when she made a visible effort to do so, he relaxed. "That's better, honey. Now, what happened?"

This time she succeeded in getting the words out. But first she pulled him aside, so Harry couldn't hear what she had to say.

"Larry," she said, her voice still showing signs of the fright she'd had. "Listen. And please! Don't laugh at what I'm going to say. Because I saw it! And I know—"

"Yes dear," he said softly, putting an arm around her shoulders. "But calm yourself!"

"—Well," she continued, "I dropped my purse just before we got here. You were in such a hurry, you didn't notice it. I began to brush the snow from it and as I bent my head I saw your footprints."

"So?"

"That's all Larry. Just *your* footprints! There were no others!"

"Don't be silly! There must have been. At least Tveet's."

"Oh Larry," she wailed. "You've got to believe me! *I saw his feet step down, but they left no prints!*"

"Just a minute, honey," he said. "Are you trying to tell me that Tveet doesn't exist?"

"I don't know what to believe," she said. "All I know is, he left no footprints."

"Now let's not go imagining things," he became stern. "Here's Tveet, himself—" his voice trailed off when he turned and saw that the old man had disappeared.

"Where'd he go?" he demanded of Harry.

"Out."

Chalmers and the girl looked dazedly at each other.

TVEET opened the door to the shack which he called his office and walked in. Mike, Toby, Bull Karney and Karney's friend, the one they called Tiny were there. Bull and Mike were arguing.

They took one look at Tveet's face and knew something was wrong.

"S'matter, Sully?" Bull asked.

Tveet smiled a strange strained smile. He took the stock certificates out and laid them on the table.

"I've just heard some bad news! I don't own the Subway. The sale was a hoax."

"That's okay, Sully," said Bull consolingly. "So you don't own the Subway? So what? I'll just go back to sleeping on park benches."

"Not me." Mike suddenly snarled. "I had a swell racket ready to go here! Me, I don't give a damn if he owns it or not, I'm staying!"

Sully Tveet shook his head slowly, sorrowfully.

"I'm sorry Mike," he said, "that

things have turned out this way. I had hopes for—well—if not to provide a home, at least to give refuge to homeless souls such as we. I thought all this was mine. It isn't! So in all honesty, I am compelled to ask you all to leave, because we do not belong here."

"Ta hell with that," Mike retorted savagely. "We're here an' here we stay. An' if we can't stay, I know a couple a' tricks. Tricks that'll put the Subway on the Fritz f'r a long time!"

"Wha' d'ya mean, wise guy?" Bull demanded.

Mike's smile was a grimace of hate.

"Y'know that business with the signal lights? Well, I know how to work them too. An' tonight some trains are goin' to get green ones when they should be red!" And before they could stop him, he started a run for the door.

His fingers were on the knob, when the sound of his name being called made him pause.

"Toby!" the voice had called impellingly.

Mike turned and what he saw made his knees go weak and his eyes turn dark in fear.

The little man, the one they called Tiny, had-called to him. But it was his appearance that made Mike know this strange fear. The small figure was bathed in a glow of golden light! Strange unearthly light. It surrounded the tiny figure like a huge halo. Even his clothes sparkled and gleamed with it. And when Tiny spoke, it was in a voice that held the muted thunder of trumpets.

"No Toby," the voice said. "You cannot go! Not anymore. You see, there are some who are given the chance to do good in life—and others—in death! Tveet was given the chance to do good in death. He did nobly. You were another. You had the same opportunity to do good. Instead you

chose evil. The choice is on your head! Your stay, as is ours in this world, is ended. We have to leave this earth for another place in which to abide. You too must leave. But we will meet no more. For where you go, you must go alone!"

CHALMERS had been stumped for a moment. Then he remembered mention of an office. The only place he could think of was a tool shack near the Clyborn station. They wasted no time in getting there.

He remembered the location of the shack. In fact he has seen it, as the train went by. He wondered at the great glow of light which came from its single window.

The train had hardly departed, when he and the girl leaped from the platform and started back to the tool shack, a hundred yards down the track. But when they opened the door, blackness greeted them. And when he pulled the cord attached to the light fixture, he saw that there was no one there.

They looked at each other in surprise.

"Didn't you see a light in here, as we went by?" he asked.

"Yes!"

Chalmers looked around to see if there was any evidence of someone having lived there. There was something lying on the table. He walked over to it and stood looking down at what he saw for a few seconds.

"Renel! Look at this."

She joined him and saw what he was looking at. Tveet's stock.

"Well, he was here. But where did

he go now?"

Irene suddenly slapped her palm against her forehead.

"Oy!" she cried. "Am I a dope!"

"Whassa matter?"

"Now I know where I saw this Tveet. You gave me that tip the other day. Well, I took the Subway that night. And we hit someone on the track. Just as they carried the body by, I looked out the window. I knew I'd seen that jacket and shirt before. But—" She left the rest unsaid.

Chalmers nodded somberly.

"Yes, Tveet is dead! Of course we can't tell anyone that his ghost tried to make a housing project out of the Subway. But these certificates lying here. I've got an idea that the Subway will be free of accidents from now on."

She looked at him curiously.

"Y' know Rene, the man must have had a lot of good in him, to have acted as he did. It's a pity he has to lie in Potters Field. Damn it," his voice rose. "I'm going to see to it that he gets the finest mausoleum in Grace-land."

"How, Larry?"

"I'm going back to that pawn shark and tell him just what his joke did. It caused Tveet's death. And if he doesn't contribute enough for that mausoleum—well—didja notice what that pawn shark was playing with when we came in?"

"No."

"A Ouija board. Tveet came back once. Y' know honey," he smiled and continued, "he might come back again—and not be so good the next time..."

COMING NEXT ISSUE . . .

SHADOW OF THE SPHINX

BY WILLIAM LAWRENCE HAMLING

A MEDAL FOR MUSTAPHA

BY ALEXANDER BLADE

Showing that war dogs are nothing new!

SOMETIMES, one hears tales of amazing exploits of animals which lead one to wonder just how dumb our animal friends really are. None of these is more fantastic and unbelievable than the true account of a dog who appeared before King George II of England to receive the highest honor which the Empire could bestow.

Mustapha, a sleek greyhound, was a veteran soldier of the English campaign against the French in 1745. This dog had the unusual assignment of carrying lighted flame sticks to the gunners. Not possessed of hands or side pockets in which to place the torches, Mustapha carried them between his teeth.

On the afternoon of May 11, during the battle at Fontenoy, the French artillery was subjecting the British lines to a heavy bombardment. Suddenly, one of the well-aimed volleys landed in the midst of the British gun crew, killing half of the men and wounding most of the others. The French soon noticed that the gun was out of commission and seizing this opportunity to advance, charged the enemy installations.

Mustapha, streaking back to the members of the crew with one of his "matches," seemed to be aware of what had happened, and of the imminent danger of the French advance. Eagerly, he presented his "match" to a dying gunner. But the soldier was too weak to move. In desperation, now, Mustapha, looked about for another way to prevent the French from seizing the gun. They were almost upon him, when Mustapha appeared to make a decision. He held the lighted stick between his fore-paws, jumped onto the cannon, and touched the flame to the fuse. The shot could not have been better if it had been aimed. It fired at point blank range directly into the advancing columns of the French detachment, wiping out three quarters of the men and sending the others fleeing back to their lines.

As a result of this amazing feat of heroism by a canine friend, the gun remained in British hands. It is no wonder, then, that a whole Empire paid tribute to the uncanny deed of a greyhound dog called Mustapha.

* * *

SUPERSTITIONS OF THE SEA

BY CARTER T. WAINWRIGHT

FOR many years sailors have harbored a fear of Friday. In the late 18th century, sailing on Friday was out of the question—the captain and crew of a vessel would not consider setting sail on that day. There is a yarn which tells of a ship's keel that was laid on Friday, she was launched on Friday, named *Friday*, commanded by Captain Friday, and lost on Friday.

The launching ceremony followed today is an outgrowth of pagan customs, customs that prevailed since man first went to sea. In ancient days the ceremony was performed as a gesture to the gods. The ship was ornamented with garlands of flowers before launching. The Greeks and Romans sacrificed animals to the gods in an elaborate ceremony.

Launching ceremonies have sometimes taken a more terrifying turn. In many lands it was customary to offer up human sacrifices when the new ship first entered the water. The Vikings and early Norsemen attached human victims to the rollers over which the ship glided into the water. This same custom was followed by the natives of

Fiji and the islands of the East Indies.

Today little or no religious symbolism is attached to the launching of a ship although the outward signs of the ancient ceremony are followed by breaking a bottle of wine or water over the bow of a ship as she commences to slide down the ways, and pronouncing the words "I christen thee—".

At one time not so long ago almost every sailor had tattoo marks on his body. But that custom is fast dying out. Originally those marks were used as identification. Then mariners adopted various designs as souvenirs or reminders of where they had traveled. Supernatural powers were attached to certain markings; many symbols of protection were worn. One of the most popular of these was a pig and a rooster tattooed on the foot with the letters H-O-L-D F-A-S-T on the tops of the fingers; it was supposed to protect the wearer when aloft and prevent him from losing his grip. Today the tattooed sailor is rather rare.

* * *



Teena lifted the egg over her head and hurled it savagely

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Taming of the Tyrant

By LEROY YERXA

Teena came to the land of the tyrant with one idea in her mind. She wanted to tame him. But the tyrant had other ideas

TEENA ARRÜ pressed her heels into the feathery body of the big Groth and guided it in a wide spiral downward toward the needle sharp mountains of the satellite Stara.

Teena Arru's oval lips were pressed together tightly. Her slim young body was poised confidently on the Groth's back, her arms about its neck, as the bird dropped to the red earth lightly, uttered a croak of satisfaction and stood quietly while Teena slipped to the ground.

She knew that she must be close to the City of Starn, Stara's only settlement, and a smile warmed the sternness of her expression. Goodman Luck's city was in for a surprise. Perhaps not at once, but wait until she had time to put her full plan into action.

Teena gave the Groth an affectionate slap on the neck and the huge bird wandered away into the shadows of the pointed hills. She knew it would be close enough to heed her whistle when she returned. The girl went toward the end of the secluded valley and set off in the direction of Starn.

As she walked, she reviewed in her mind the chances that were to take place on Goodman Luck's satellite.

Luck was an earth man and not very pleasant. Yet, Teena's heart beat swiftly when she thought of the tall, graceful

Luck striding up and down the streets of his city, dominating every man who worked for him. Luck's gray eyes, his curly black hair—yes—even the deep voice, were things that thrilled Teena and made her dream of him.

She increased her stride now and ahead the dusty, makeshift buildings of Starn were visible. Goodman Luck's city was a dirty mining camp. No home these, but shacks that housed the rough miners who came from all parts of the system to work under a man they admired.

As Teena Arru hurried onward, her smile grew bolder. She had left behind the silken clothing of the court and was dressed in ankle length tights that she knew were common apparel among the women of Stara. Her blouse would match any seductive bit of cotton that Stara's women could flout. Teena was no fool. Her plan was well thought out and it included a wide leather cartridge belt and a small, powerful atom-pistol.

She reached the outer limits of Starn and in spite of carefully rehearsed plans, she wondered if she really looked the part of one of Stara's women.

Teena's eyes grew wide as she ventured deeper into the city of shacks. She had flown low over Starn before. She had seen Goodman Luck and had heard countless stories of him. But

Starn was even worse than she had imagined.

The satellite produced only two materials in any quantity. Platinum, which made Luck's fortune, and a thick red dust that settled over everything and made the sprawling city of Starn look like a place the God of Raan had forgotten.

The shacks were in various stages of disrepair and there was no street system to speak of. However, as most alleys led toward the center of the place, and Teena Arru had already done some scouting from the air, she knew the direction in which she must go.

MEN stopped to stare at her as she passed. She tried not to blush as the husky, almost brutal appearing miners turned to stare after her. She wondered if she looked like a stranger to them.

Her goal was just ahead. The false fronted building drooped in the half-light of the sun. It was large, the meeting place of miners when they left the shafts of Luck's mines and sought refreshments. Dirt was stamped down by many feet and dust left shoe patterns across the creaking porch into the interior.

Teena drew a deep breath, adapted a swagger, and entered.

She let the door slam behind her and gradually her eyes grew accustomed to the poor light. Several men were sitting in a far corner engaged in a game that used colored discs and oblong cards. Behind a bar stood a black-haired giant with a patch over one eye.

Teena stared at him. He was the biggest thing she had ever seen. There was no man on her home satellite, Raan, who would reach his arm-pits.

"I came here to see Goodman Luck," she said.

The giant continued to polish on a

glass. Then he laughed and the room seemed to vibrate with the sound.

"So it's Luck you want to see," he said. "And who'll I say is calling?"

A guffaw of laughter came from the table. Teena turned. The others were all staring at her now. She felt suddenly helpless.

"Men call me Tiny. I came in on one of the tramp-freighters from Earth. Heard Luck was in need of good women up here."

She accented the word *good*, trying to play the part she had rehearsed. The barkeeper laughed.

"Why is it, boys," he shouted across the room, "that we get nothing but the gentlest, most proper young ladies up here in this hell-hole?"

Someone snorted with glee, and a miner slapped his hand down on the table so hard that a stack of chips upset and flew to the floor.

Teena knew that if she was to win the game she had started, she must impress them at once.

She leaned over the bar and brought the flat of her hand across the giant's cheek with a stinging blow. He backed away from her, surprise and anger mirrored on his face.

"Now," she asked sweetly, "will you stop pushing me around and tell me where I can find Luck?"

"Yes, Marth," a startling, cool voice said from the door. "Tell the young goddess where she can find Goodman Luck."

FEET scraped nervously under the poker table. Marth, for it was evidently he who had been slapped, nodded respectfully.

"Sure, and she's a speedy craft, Mr. Luck," he rubbed his cheek ruefully. "And well armored, I'd say."

Teena turned her back to the bar and surveyed the newcomer. She was not

disappointed with Goodman Luck. In the rugged, dust colored uniform of the mines, his bronzed face and alert figure were startling. He seemed to glide rather than walk toward her. She knew that day or night, among friends or enemies, his hand was only a split second away from the heavy pistol that dangled from his waist. She was also aware that no part of her slim body escaped the scrutiny his gray eyes gave her. A smile parted his lips and she knew these were the whitest, most even teeth she had ever seen.

"Miss . . . ?"

"Just Tiny," she said, and smiled almost shyly. She had nearly forgotten that to Luck, she was to be the hardened space-traveler who lived for today and today alone. "I—came from Earth. You advertised for women to help settle Stara."

He was close to her now. He placed a firm hand on her bare shoulder.

"Settle Stara?" he asked in a low voice. "You've got enough dynamite to blow the damned place up! You're sure you know what a tough proposition you're up against?"

She flushed under the intensity of his gaze.

"I—I've heard that Stara isn't a very law-abiding place. That it's growing more lawless and—and raw with the type of men you are hiring."

Luck's eyes flashed. "Get this straight, Tiny," he said. "There's nothing wrong with my men. They're the best. They come from the most fearless race in the solar system. They seek adventure here, but with adventure, they must have pleasure to keep them content. The women, women like you, have nothing to fear from the rest of the world. You're so much scum thrown away by society. On Stara there's a place for all of you. Adventurers need relaxation to remind them

that their life isn't too bad. They need women to care for their homes, and to add some small comfort to their everyday lives."

Her eyes were bored.

"Lecture 29," she said. "Look, I'm here, and you don't have to give me a sales-talk. I think Stara can stand plenty of cleaning up from the looks of the shacks you live in."

His grip on her shoulder loosened, and he stepped back. "You'll find a room at my place. Marth will take you and your luggage out there."

Marth had been listening carefully. At a nod from Luck, he pushed up a section of the bar and slid out into the room. He was waiting behind Teena.

"I'm *wearing* my luggage," she said quietly. "If Marth is ready, I am."

"Good," Luck said. "Maybe we can find time for a little home cooked food and a celebration tonight."

Teena watched him leave and a smile of satisfaction touched her mouth. She had succeeded in every detail thus far. Yes, there would be a celebration this evening. It would end very swiftly and she hoped would give Mr. Goodman Luck a great deal to think about.

"DO you know," Luck said across the small table, "that you're the most attractive girl on the entire satellite?"

They had finished the evening meal of bread, canned chicken from earth and steaming coffee.

She smiled pertly. "Thank you sir. Coming from one who has evidently had much experience with lovely ladies, that's a fine compliment."

Luck laughed. "Experience? Perhaps Marth didn't tell you that Stara had become almost over-populated with attractive females. I'm very much afraid that Gret will break her poor heart at being turned out on such short

notice."

"Gret?" Teena was alert, every nerve taut.

His eyes lifted to hers.

"Gret Rose, a very charming Martian girl. She was asked to get out this afternoon to make room for you."

She wanted to jump up from the table and tear out his eyes. Those charming, caressing eyes that were roving over her. *Be careful, Teena, her mind warned her. You mustn't spoil everything now!*

"I—suppose that was meant to be flattering?"

"Nooo!" he said slowly. "Not flattering. However, even the Top Man, Marth's title for me, must have company. It's generally conceded that my house is the best of the lot. Probably more for the food and lodgings than because of the company. At least the others seemed pleased."

She lowered her eyes, staring at the remains of the canned fowl.

"There are many—visitors—here?"

She was startled to feel his hand closing over her own. He stood up, pushing the table roughly to one side. His arms went about her shoulders and she jerked away from him.

"Please! . . ."

Luck frowned. "For the love of Mike, Tiny, don't act coy!"

"I'm sorry." A tear formed in her eye and dropped to her cheek. She wiped it away impatiently. "I'm not a tramp, even if I look like one."

Luck smiled. "I never thought you were," he insisted. "You wanted to come here. I thought you understood."

"I do understand," she cried. "I understand that Stara, if it remains this way, will be the hell-hole of the solar system. You and your men aren't bad. You're lonely and you need relaxation. You take it in any form it comes. But don't you see that Stara is past the

pioneer stage? It needs homes and families like other centers of civilization."

As she spoke, Luck's eyes grew hard. The smile was wiped away completely. He waited until she was finished.

"So you're the girl who came on a freighter! Who wore all the luggage you owned! We don't need any missionaries on Stara. Understand that? We're tough and we're glad of it. We enjoy life in our own primitive way and we don't want any one to explain the pleasures of a settled existence."

"We all lived in your *settled* worlds once, and they drove us crazy. We came here to escape the very thing you're trying to sell me."

"You're wrong," Teena cried. "You *did* live in settled worlds, but someone, somehow made you unhappy. You didn't escape from those worlds. You escaped from the person or problem that made you unhappy."

For a moment she thought he agreed. His eyes softened, but only for an instant.

"Who told you that?" he demanded.

"No one told me anything about you," she said almost in a whisper. "I've seen you many times, and I've admired you. I thought you would listen to me, would help me. Now I see that you're like all the others."

"You're damned right I am," he said evenly. "I don't know why I invited you out here to begin with. I'd be better off with Gret Rose. At least she doesn't preach sermons."

HE pushed her, at the same time releasing his grip from her shoulder. Teena sprawled on the floor. When she arose, her small fists were clenched.

"Thank you for being a gentleman," she said, and moved toward the door.

He didn't answer and when she looked back, he was sitting at the table

once more. Blindly she found her way to the door and let herself out into the foggy night.

Goodman Luck sat for a long time, head down on the table. His dinner was forgotten. He heard the girl's footsteps fade away into the darkness. Deep inside him something was stirring that wasn't pleasant.

Why did she come? What had been her purpose for tormenting him? Luck flattered himself that he was a hard man. Tonight a slim, fiery girl had beaten him.

He swore aloud and turned away from the window.

She would probably leave Stara in the morning. Probably bribe a freighter captain to take her on as a stowaway. He nodded decisively to himself and switched on the lamp over the bed and leaned over the mirror-screen of the small mесо-sender on the night table. He pressed the contact button and asked for the space-port. In a moment, Captain Messenger's ruddy face was visible from the clearing tower.

"There's a girl who will probably try to leave the port in the morning," Luck said. "Slim, blond and a lady, playing the part of a tramp. Don't let her get away and call me when you locate her."

Messenger's eyes twinkled.

"Yes, sir! Mr. Luck. You can depend on me, sir. Is that all?"

Luck said, "That's all."

He switched off the mесо-sender. The mirror-screen grew black once more. Luck stretched out comfortably. For a long time he couldn't sleep, but lay still, staring at the wall.

TEENA ARRU had some trouble locating the hidden valley where she had left the Groth. The fog closed in tightly about her and the wind rose, throwing red dust into her face. At last she reached the place where she knew

the great bird would be. Placing her fingers to her lips, she produced a high pitched, steady whistle that brought the Groth fluttering down from the darkness of the crags.

She mounted and dug her heels into the bird's side. Huge wings beat the night air and she was lifted upward. Soon the fog was gone and only the sky, filled with dozens of bright satellites was around her. The Mother Planet, a vast, circular globe in the distance, glowed softly in the blue-black darkness.

The Mother Planet, Teena thought, was like some huge comfortable Goddess always there to guide the people of her satellites safely to their goal. Without the great ball of dull light, the sky would be too vast—too lonely, to venture into.

The Groth spread its great wings splendidly and the ugly neck stretched forward to its full length. Its beak opened as the bird uttered a joyous squawk at being free of the red satellite once more.

Teena Arru settled down comfortably, half buried in the soft, warm feathers of the bird's back. She leaned forward, her head against its neck and closed her eyes to rest.

Goodman Luck, she thought, was a strange man. Hard, yes, but not entirely bad. She found herself pitying rather than hating him. Beneath all the bluster and bravado, Teena saw the boy in Luck.

Teena had failed in her first mission, but her sister, Princess Laura, and the other women on the planet Raan, would not give up so easily. This was only the first scouting expedition against the rough hewn satellite of Stara.

There would be many others.

She was half asleep when the Groth's warning squawk told her to prepare for the downward flight to Raan.

She sat up, dug her heels in tightly and strengthened her grip on the bird's neck.

"Down!" Her voice was commanding.

The Groth fell forward into a steep dive. Teena felt the wind whipping against her face. Her hair fell behind her, a blond flag, twisting and whipping from her head. She held her breath.

Raan was close, thrusting its green, warm valley up toward her with incredible speed. She felt the wind change, and as the Groth slowed its speed, the air was warm and pleasing. The harshness of the sky and of Stara, was gone. Below her, lights twinkled in the Valley of Arru. The castle was visible, its worn, gray stone snuggled gently into the curve of the river that twisted the length of the royal valley.

The Groth squawked again, joyously, because it was coming home. It settled down gently on a parapet, high on the left wing of the castle. The left wing was dark. King Arru had closed it when the queen died and he and his two daughters lived on the ground floor of the main building.

Teena dismounted, slapped the Groth on the neck and watched it wing away down the valley toward the Groth cliffs. She found her way across the upper balcony, entered the castle through a narrow window in the stair tower and hurried toward her own room. Half an hour later she had bathed and slipped into bed.

KING Peter Arru waited for the attendant to open the door that led from the royal chamber. He reached the top of the stairs that led into the banquet hall and shaped a pleasant smile on his thin, reddened lips. His footsteps became mincing. Peter's uniform of the court had been carefully modeled after styles smuggled into

Raan from the earth. The high heeled shoes, silk stockings, knee-length jacket of carefully trimmed velvet, and plumed hat were, it is true, an example of styles from earth. However, the style books Peter purchased at enormous prices were actually history books of earth clothing. The costume he had chosen was from the French court of 1700.

Peter reached the banquet hall and approached his daughters, who were eating silently, separated from each other by the long, beautiful arranged table. The King approached Teena first, placed a slim hand on her shoulder and greeted her softly.

"A fine morning, my wren. You rested well?"

His voice was condescending, in a way that convinced Teena each time she heard it that her father paid very little attention to his daughters' lives and cared less what happened to them.

"I am happy, thank you."

Her tone was abrupt. She was comparing this soft, spineless father of hers to the men of Stara.

Peter moved with deliberate slowness to Laura, who awaited him at the far end of the table. Laura watched his coming with wide, bewildered blue eyes. Laura was as lovely as her sister, but she had been sheltered as the youngest child and dared not let herself think in terms of escape, as did her sister.

"And you, Laura?"

She looked up quickly and blushed as her father kissed her hand.

"Happy, father," she said gracefully, and watched with tear dimmed eyes as Peter went to his own place, waited for the chair to be placed for him and sank into it with a groan.

A servant came at once with a covered dish, and placed it before the king. The cover was lifted. Under it

was the poached yoke of a Groth egg.

The King ate slowly, delicately, never troubling himself to speak to either of them again. Several moments passed before Teena spoke.

"You are attending the races today, father?"

King Peter looked disturbed.

"But of course," he said. "And is there a better way to spend my hours?"

"Of course not, father," Teena was willing, even anxious to have her father away.

She remembered the words of the Dutchess of Raan, second only to herself and her sister, in power over the satellite.

"The men of Raan are doomed." The Dutchess of the Valley of Pines was only thirty, tall, splendidly built and alive in every muscle of her rippling body. "I tell you, we are not slaves, but women. Women alive and eager to live and love. We cannot save our men, for they refuse to be saved. It is our duty to save ourselves."

The occasion had been a party, held at the castle and attended by a hundred women of high nobility. Teena herself had entered the conversation with great interest.

"But—how can we accomplish this?" the wife of a lesser official had asked.

Teena Arru stood up.

"By migrating to Stara," she cried. "There we will find men—strong pioneering men who need us even as we need them. This is no suggestion that we become unfaithful to the men of our race. It is a last chance to save the people of Raan and annex the powerful, healthy blood of Stara."

"But Stara?" someone protested. "It's a rough, uncouth place. The men are little better than animals. The women worse."

But the Duchess had agreed with Teena.

"The Princess is right," she cried. "The men of Stara are fine and noble. We could make Stara a respectable satellite. We could fight against the scum of our own sex who live there. Is there a woman here who dares not match her charm against the women of Stara?"

And so Teena Arru, because she was the highest of them all, was to establish herself with Goodman Luck and plead her cause.

And now, she thought, she was home again and they had lost. Her father and the soft-shelled, brainless men of Raan would go to the races today. They would sit under colored umbrellas while black men waved fans to cool them. They would sip daintily from cool glasses of mint-water and watch, of all things, the slow Groths as they staggered around a quarter-mile track to see who would stumble over the finish line first. Was this then to be the fate of Raan?

GOODMAN LUCK spent a bad night. His sleep brought dreams of Tiny. His awakening made the memory of her frightened face even clearer.

For the first time in his life he regretted treating a woman badly. Perhaps it was because the women of the camps were a hard lot. They expected, yes, demanded, rough treatment. They crawled back on their knees, begging to be taken in again.

Luck dressed quickly, eagerly. He called the space-port twice before leaving for the mines. Messenger had warned every captain he would lose a month's wages if he carried a stow-away. Thus far no one had reported a girl to fit Tiny's description.

Disgusted with his men, but mostly with himself, Luck reached town in time to ride to Number One mine with

the last load of miners. He sat quietly among them in the two wheel mono-car, and listened to them shout and brag about the cards they held and the whiskey they had absorbed the night before. None of them seemed to be careful of his tongue because the boss was near. Luck knew they had learned that he never touched a man who lived freely and spoke honestly.

The entrance to Mine One yawned before them in the red, dusty hill-side. The car slipped into the black hole, stopped on the elevator track and was automatically locked into place. Without hesitation, the elevator dropped and the car sped down to the tenth level under the clay and rock hills.

It was Luck's policy to visit each mine sometime during the day. There were ten of them, all leading into wide veins of pure platinum.

Between each trip into the shafts, Luck contacted Messenger at the spaceport. Each time his expression was slightly more doleful. Messenger was forced to report his failure to locate the girl.

By noon, Luck was furious. He stood in the control shack at Mine Nine and switched on the mессo-sender. Messenger came in on the mirror-screen. His jacket was buttoned about his neck and red-dust covered his hair.

"Dammit, Mr. Luck," he said, before Luck could speak. "It isn't any use. I've been out and examined every ship on the field. I even sent a bunch of boys to search the town thinking she might have holed up somewhere. The girl just isn't here, that's all."

Luck scowled. "Can you trust every captain who's leaving today?"

Messenger nodded and grinned faintly.

"You can trust 'em with a load of platinum every month. Is the girl more valuable?"

The scowl didn't leave Luck's face as he switched off the screen.

MARTH, the one eyed, red bearded bartender in Starn's only saloon had more power than appeared on the surface. In size alone he matched any of Luck's motley crew. Marth the Merciless, the men called him. Marth was Luck's right hand, in times of danger. His dress, the rugged brown cotton trousers and jacket of the townsmen, hid little of his huge biceps and shoulder muscles.

At night Marth ran the saloon and kept order among the men by the simple expedient of bumping heads together with such force that he cracked skulls as most men do eggs. Marth stood for no horse-play in his domain and he had little respect for the way Luck's men talked about women.

Under the rough, tanned skin of Marth's chest beat a heart so soft that he suffered miseries unknown and unsuspected by others. Marth had come to Stara to escape a wife. This wife, like so many of the middle aged shrews on earth, had ruled Herbert Marth with a mailed fist. He had worked in the steel mills and when his skin was cooled and away from the fires, at night, his soul was tormented afresh by a nagging woman.

Marth had told no one of this. He had come in a space-freighter, mined three times as much ore as his nearest competitor, and finally been brought out of Mine Seven to serve Luck as a sort of peace officer.

Not that the office was official. But most of Luck's men knew Marth's power and respected it.

One or two men didn't.

* * *

One of these was "Noose." "Noose" had no other name. He was a French Canadian breed who escaped narrowly

from hanging in some northern province on earth and was using Stara as a perfect place to live out a useless life. Luck didn't like "Noose." He didn't trust the narrow eyed, mustached little man. But "Noose" was a miner and a hard working man. He did more than his share of work, lived quietly near the edge of Starn, and avoided Marth.

When Noose first came to Stara he spent his nights in the saloon. For three nights, Marth listened to him brag about the amount of work he could do. By the end of that same week, Noose was ready to start a revolution, murder Luck and take over the satellite. That was how Noose's narrow little mind worked.

Then Noose stood too close to Marth one night, and shot off his mouth with the vilest adjectives he could choose against Gret Rose, the girl who lived with Goodman Luck. Marth didn't like Gret, but to listen to what Noose had to say was too much for Marth's disposition.

He leaned over the bar and started to choke Noose with one hand. The *breed* was yanked backward, his breath cut off with a quick gasp, his heels kicking desperately against the rail of the bar.

There he hung, eyes popping, face a dark purple. Marth didn't release his grip and no man dared interfere. Noose was saved only by the sudden entrance of Luck himself.

After that, Noose stayed away from Marth. But he spent long hours at the saloon, gulping mug after mug of fierce, hot *teagwa* and waited the day he might be sufficiently brave, with the help of the Martian drink to put a knife into Marth's broad back.

THERE was no remorse in the heart of Teena Arru when she arranged a second meeting of the women, in the

walled garden of the castle. This afternoon the men had come to the race track below the castle and were already cheering weakly as the ungainly Groths made fools of themselves.

At the garden gate everything looked innocent. Women came, seemingly to enjoy the shade and wait until their fathers or husbands came for them.

Teena Arru, dressed in finery that would have driven Goodman Luck mad with excitement, presided over the meeting. There was serious business here, spiced a little by the high color of the women's cheeks and the excitement that came into their voices when they questioned Teena about her journey.

When the story was finished, the Duchess arose. Her name and station, when she was formally introduced, was the Duchess Elsa Mawn of the Valley of Pines. She came with her sickly husband from a green valley to the north. She, more than anyone else, was lonely. She lived alone, caring for a man she had grown to hate.

Elsa Mawn was still vibrant with the color and flesh of a maiden. She was more bitterly disappointed at Teena's story than were the others.

"Then surely," she said. "It had been proven that we are needed on Stara. The battle must be mapped carefully and we must attack with weapons they understand."

Teena smiled.

"Then you don't fear men who throw you on the floor and ask you to leave their house?"

The Duchess blushed.

"I've yet to see the man who *could* throw me out," she said bravely.

Her friends chuckled.

"I've yet to see a *man*," one of them added.

Teena Arru knew that come what may, the women of Raan were ready to fight. She had a plan. Perhaps if they

would help her, it would succeed.

"Listen to me," she said. "We are honest with ourselves. Perhaps more honest than any race of women in history. Our own world is collapsing before us. We have no children to carry on after we are gone. We long to live happy, natural lives."

"Stara is a good place, but like any frontier, it needs the touch of women to make it attractive and habitable. There are women there now, such as they are. Stara's men are not happy. They know no other life. They drink and eat their way to a grave.

"There is only one way we can take over Stara and convince them that they need something more than the company of useless tramps."

A breathless silence hung over her audience.

"We must go to Stara, a few at a time. We must dress as I dressed during the first journey and show these men we are not afraid of work or hardship. More than that, we will dispose of the women who are there and put ourselves in their places."

"But how?" Elsa Mawn cried. "We cannot—kill. . . ."

"No—there is a better way. Before the first of us leave Raan, we must all hide our Groths where they cannot be found. In this way, our men cannot stop us from escaping. I will act as commander, live on Stara and plan each move carefully.

"When possible, I will capture one of Stara's women. I will tie her to a Groth and the bird will bring her here, to the cliffs."

A murmur of admiration swept through the crowd. Teena held her arm up for silence.

"You must place a guard at the cliffs. When a Groth returns with a captive, imprison the woman. Then put one of yourselves in her place.

"Feed these women well and when there are but a few of you left in Raan, let them go free."

The Duchess laughed. "*They'll* certainly be embarrassing subjects for the good King Peter to rule."

Teena smiled.

"I doubt if even they will interest Peter Arru very much," she confessed. "Is my plan clear to all of you?"

Nodding heads told her that it was.

"Good! Then leave the castle garden, in small groups. Hide your Groths and prepare to leave for Stara."

"And remember," Duchess Elsa Mawn warned. "You who think that Stara will be an easy world to conquer had better carry every weapon a woman can obtain. You'll need them!"

GOODMAN LUCK arose slowly from his desk, staring with unbelieving eyes toward the far end of the room. An incredulous grin fanned across his face.

"*Tiny!*"

Teena Arru hesitated in the door, smiling at him, wondering just how he would accept her return. She had been careful to dress as she had the first time she came to Stara. She had entered Luck's house and found him in the study, working at his desk.

"I—didn't know how you would greet me," she said hesitantly. "We didn't part very friendly."

"Tiny," Luck repeated, his eyes eager. "Good Lord, girl, where have you been?"

Teena came toward him and perched lightly on the corner of the desk. Luck wanted to throw his arms around her to make sure she wasn't a ghost, but instead, he sank back into his chair.

"You don't think you've stopped every method of escape from Stara, do you?" she teased. "I thought you might be sorry for the way you treated me.

I came back to find out."

Luck felt that strange sensation coming back again. The feeling he had when Tiny was near. His life had been turned upside down. He wasn't able to concentrate as he should have.

"Tiny," his cheeks flamed. "I—want to apologize. I guess I've been pretty crude since I came to this God-forgotten place. The women here are tough. A man forgets . . ."

"His manners?" she asked gently. "You're forgiven if you don't let it happen again."

He sprang to his feet eagerly.

"And you'll stay here?"

Teena laughed.

"If *here* means Stara, yes. I can't live in your house."

"I have a cottage near the river. It's close enough so we can be together. The lock is strong."

"One more thing," Teena said, and wondered if this were going to spoil everything. "You'll have to send this creature Gret Rose back to Mars."

Luck was completely under her control now. He wanted only to please her, keep her from running away again.

"Tonight," he promised. "She's in town—at the bar. I'll go there now and tell Marth to take care of shipping her out on the next freighter. Then I'll return and we'll make the cottage ready for you."

He left the room hurriedly urging her to stay where she was while he found his jacket. In a moment he was back like an eager boy, hurrying to her side.

"You'll be comfortable while I'm gone." He stood close to her, wanting her respect and love more than he had ever wanted anything. She thought he was going to try to kiss her, but he turned away. "I'll be back soon."

Teena listened to the outer door slam and heard his footsteps hurrying away down the red sand walk.

She stood up and went to the window. For a long time she stared along the road after his retreating figure.

TEENA was startled suddenly by a sound behind her. A low, rich voice purred:

"Turn around slowly, very slowly."

Teena's fingers clenched. She turned, careful to make no unexpected move. She knew before she spoke to the slim, red-gowned woman, that this was Gret Rose. Gret had the pale, slant-eyed face of a Martian. In a way she was beautiful, but with an unclean beauty that Teena had grown to hate.

"I was in the closet," Gret said. Teena shuddered, for the Martian woman was toying with a slim glittering dagger. "I heard what you said to Luck."

Teena didn't speak.

"Do you think I am fooled by you?" Greta asked, and her voice was like the purr of a cat. "You are not good for Luck. I am good for him. It is as simple as that, and when you are dead, he will understand."

The dagger was balanced carefully in Greta Rose's hand.

Teena smiled suddenly. "If I were so sure of myself," she said. "I would let Luck choose his own mate."

Greta Rose remained impassive.

"Luck chose me long ago. There was no quarrel before you came."

Teena's body tensed suddenly.

"He's returning now." Se glanced toward the window. "Suppose he sees us both, and decides who is preferable?"

Greta Rose glanced around toward the window. At the same time, Teena Arru sprang. The knife slashed over her head and buried itself in the desk. She heard Greta Rose swear loudly as she tried to escape. Her shoulder hit Greta's knees and they both went down.

in a scratching, clawing huddle. Teena was supple. She was more than a match for the soft Martian woman. Without pity or remorse, Teena trussed her enemy up securely with strips torn from Greta's skirt. Then she hurried to the door at the rear of the house. She placed her fingers to her lips and whistled shrilly.

The night was silent. Then from beyond the river in the direction of the hidden valley, she could hear the heavy beat of wings. The Groth was on its way. Soon her bird would carry its first prisoner back to Raan.

Teena looked down at the gagged, trussed figure of Greta Rose.

"You have the honor of being the first hostage to fly to Raan," she said with biting sarcasm.

MANY changes took place on Stara in those next few weeks. Luck could not understand what was happening. If any of the men had an inkling of the cause, they refused to talk for reasons best known to themselves.

From the beginning, Greta Rose's desertion troubled Luck. She could not be located, and yet no record was made of her leaving the space-port.

But Luck soon forgot the Martian, and spent his days trying to please Teena Arru. Teena, firmly entrenched in the cottage by the river, was preoccupied. He saw her almost every evening, but several times, when he tried to arouse her by pounding on the cottage door late at night, she could not be awakened.

Then other women left Stara abruptly. In their place, strangers appeared. These stowaways were clever, for even the keen eyes of Messenger could not catch them leaving the ships.

Then gradually men also changed. There was less fighting and drinking at Marth's place. A freighter arrived

with, of all things, a load of household goods. These items, never before worth a dime on Stara, sold at unheard of prices. Men rushed about paying a thousand dollars in platinum for a pair of curtains. Beds, brushes, and tables—everything they could buy, were worth any amount it cost to own them.

Then came the crowning touch that sent Luck to Teena Arru with a scowl of displeasure on his face. It started in Marth's place, soon after Goodman Luck came in with instructions for the coming week. Marth cornered him at the bar.

"Damn funny thing happened a little while ago, Mr. Luck," Marth said. "Two of our best men, Walth and Arun, from Mine Seven, got into a fight about women."

Luck grinned. "And that doesn't happen five times a night?"

He turned and surveyed the men in question. They were staring at each other over a card table.

"But this is different," Marth insisted. "They're fighting over a woman all right, but not like you think. I guess maybe you don't know what's going on around here."

Luck didn't, and it made him angry. He hadn't been blind to the changes taking place around him. He poured himself a drink from a bottle Marth produced.

"The truth is, I don't," he admitted. "This business of the oldtimers leaving and a bunch of new women coming in. Then this freighter load of household goods? I didn't think any of the boys were ready to settle down . . ."

Marth chuckled. Then his smile faded and he looked serious.

"Funny thing," he said. "It's leaked out that the girl you call Tiny has something to do with it."

Luck's glass hit the bar with a thump.

"Leaked out?"

Marth was flustered. "Understand, I'm repeating gossip, and only for your own good, Mr. Luck. I don't know why, but somehow the boys credit it all to her."

Luck was quiet for some time.

"Now look here, Mr. Luck," Marth pleaded. "Don't act like she was doing something wrong. This change may be a good thing."

Luck's eyes swept up to meet Marth's.

"Let me be the judge of that," he snapped. "Stara has to be a tough place. It takes two fisted men to stand the life here, and get the work done. If the men are going soft, I don't like it. If I find the cause, I'll destroy it!"

"Maybe so," Marth admitted. "I've seen men fight over a woman before, but this is the first time I've ever heard them fighting because one of them insulted her."

LUCK stormed down the small path that led to Teena Arru's cottage. He saw her moving about inside. He pounded on the door and was startled by the picture she made in the soft blue robe as she answered his knock.

"It's a little late for a visit isn't it?"

Luck pushed her roughly aside and strode in.

"Look here Tiny," he said gruffly.

"There are a lot of funny things happening in Starn."

"Funny—I don't understand."

"I'm not sure of that," Luck said.

"That's why I'm here. The men are going soft on me."

Teena frowned. "They are getting their work done, aren't they?"

"That isn't it," he insisted stubbornly. "Stara has been a man's world. We've been tough and ready for anything. In a way, I've been proud of running that kind of a mining organi-

zation. Since you arrived, the men are acting as though they were—uh—missionaries or something."

He watched her cheeks grow red.

"You called me a missionary once," she said. "Is that a subtle way of blaming me because your world isn't as it should be?"

He knew that he shouldn't have opened his big mouth. Perhaps he should have thought it over before he came to Tiny. Marth had said that *he* agreed with the change. Still, Luck thought stubbornly, Stara's men were softening up. In the end it would mean trouble.

"Supposing I *am* responsible for the changes that have taken place?" she said suddenly.

"I'd kick you out again," he said, "for good."

Teena stiffened. All the breeding of a princess was visible on her face.

"Then *kick*," she said, "and be sure to hurt me, so that you can prove what a strong man you are!"

Luck glared at her for a moment, his fists clenching. But he didn't move . . .

WHEN she stopped near the river and looked back through the lighted door, he was still standing there, as stern and forbidding as the country he ruled.

It seemed to Teena tonight, that every woman had reached a goal but herself.

She continued on her way toward the valley, never knowing that a short distance behind, Luck had taken up the chase. Once before, Tiny had gone out of his life so suddenly and completely that he had never been able to find out where she had hidden.

This time he would know. Far ahead, he watched her leave the trail and vanish into the valley of the needle-

sharp mountains. She seemed to know her way well.

Luck followed swiftly, managing to keep her in sight. Twice he heard her whistle, then hesitate as though expecting an answer. His anger mounted. Did she have an accomplice? Then Tiny went on again, climbing higher into the foothills of the range.

The going was rougher now. Luck swore at the sharp stones that cut his boots. Then, unexpectedly, he came out behind a small outcropping of stone and saw her not ten feet away.

Luck crept forward in the protection of the rock and looked over it at Tiny. His eyes widened. She was standing in front of a huge, grotesque bird. The creature towered above the girl and its long neck and ugly bill weaved back and forth in agony as she scolded it. Then Luck saw the reason why the bird had not answered her summons. On a rough nest it had layed five huge, black and orange eggs.

He forgot that he was supposed to be hiding from her.

"Tiny, for the love of Mike? . . ."

Startled, she turned to face him.

"You kicked me out once," she said icily. "Why do you follow me?" Luck stepped around the rock that had hidden him and approached her. The bird started to make queer unpleasant sounds in its throat.

"Tiny," he said. "Why do you punish this poor bird. It seems to have a homing instinct. Isn't that what you're trying to sell me?"

He was sorry that he had said it. She bent over swiftly and picked up one of the eggs. Before he could dodge, she threw it at him. Luck backed up, tripped and sprawled on his back. At the same time, the bird placed one huge claw on his side and held him down.

"Hey—cut it out."

He howled in protest as the heavy

shell hit him full in the face. A vile, yellow liquid spilled into his eyes and mouth. It blinded him and ran down his clothes.

"That for your homing instinct, Mr. Luck," she said.

There was a loud flutter of wings, and Luck tried to wipe the mess from his eyes. Before he could see again, he was alone, and the Groth was a small speck in the sky.

He looked at the remaining eggs and grinned ruefully.

"What an omelet I'd make," he said, and got wearily to his feet. "That girl has a temper."

TEENA ARRU heard someone on the road coming closer to her. She had changed her mind and was on her way back to the city of Starn.

"You needn't be afraid of me, Tiny," a gruff voice said. "I kinda thought the boss was going off with some mean ideas in his head."

"Marth," Teena had grown to trust the giant. "Marth, he's thrown me out. I can't leave Stara. Where can I go?"

Marth blushed to the roots of his hair.

"I was thinking, Tiny," he said.

"Me, I'm a good man. I ain't never told anyone here, but I was married on earth. She was kind of a shrew, and I ran away from her. But, I'm a good man like I said, and I got another shack up near the mines. You can stay there, if you don't let any of the boys know about it."

Teena went up on her tip-toes and planted a kiss on Marth's bearded jaw.

"You are an angel wrapped in wolf's clothing," she said softly. "Honestly Marth, I won't tell a soul."

SHIPLOAD after shipload of household goods and feminine bric-a-brac came in from earth. Stara was chang-

ing and the satellite Stara was 'softening up' under the spell of Raan women. Formal protests were lodged with Goodman Luck. Against his own will, he was forced to allow a minister and a teacher to come in from earth. The first wedding took place during the second month after he and Tiny fought. After that, weddings came thick and fast. The houses that lined the dusty alleys of Stara were cleaned, curtains appeared at the windows.

To the women of Raan, even with the coming of cleanliness, Stara did not compare with the rich homes they had been accustomed to. However, at Teena Arru's strict orders, each of them claimed to be an earth woman and never mentioned Raan after they arrived, via Groth-back, on the dusty red satellite of Stara.

With the exception of Goodman Luck's temper, everything went well on Stara until Moose noticed a light in Marth's deserted shack. Moose had found no woman, or rather, there was no woman of Raan who could bring herself to cherish the shifty eyed little breed.

Therefore, Norse was jealous and bitter about the whole thing. He hated Marth, and as it was late at night, thought this might be a chance to stick his knife into Marth's back and escape unseen.

To his surprise, it was not Marth he saw when he edged close to the window and stared inside.

Teena Arru had not often allowed light to come from the shack at night. She continued to lead attacks on the few cheap women left on Stara. She saw to it that Raan women were established as soon as they arrived. She used Marth's shack as a clearing house.

And so the Moose remained outside the window for some time, his small eyes more narrow than ever. He was

too excited to leave, but feasted his eyes on the girl within the hut. Then he realized the importance of the information he had. Tiny had been banished from Goodman Luck's world a month ago. Now here she was, hiding in Marth's shack. She must have Marth's permission.

Moose left the hut and moved soundlessly until he was sure he was out of hearing distance. Then he broke into a swift run and didn't stop until he reached Goodman Luck's house.

A SLIM, frightened girl made her way down the street and into Marth's saloon. One would have suspected her of spending days aboard a freighter, and being dropped, tired and hungry, into a strange country.

In truth, she was Laura Arru, Teena's timid sister. Laura had been the last to come. She had watched with satisfaction as each woman left the blighted satellite of Raan and rode out of sight on the back of a Groth. Now that she was here herself, and unable to find Teena, Laura grew doubtful.

She had been instructed to go directly to Marth, and she recognized the huge man behind the bar. Laura crossed the room and put one foot boldly on the brass rail. She knew that in the tight breeches of the Raan court, every inch of her figure was accented for the men behind her to stare at. It gave her a frightening yet pleasant tingle up and down the spine.

Marth stared at her, waiting for her to speak.

"I came because Tiny sent for me," she said.

Marth had greeted many women before. He had become Teena's helper.

He was about to speak when he saw Moose come in.

"Sit down there at the table," he told her. "I will speak to you soon."

Laura followed Marth's eyes toward the man who had entered. She didn't like him. Moose was grinning at her. His small eyes and blackened, unwashed face sickened her. She looked away quickly, found her way blindly to a table near the bar.

To her dismay, Moose came to her table and sat down. He leaned toward her.

"Another bundle from Heaven," he sneered. "Maybe this time, I'm the lucky man?"

She knew that he guessed why she was here. Could he be a friend of Tee-na's? She looked quickly toward Marth, hoping he would interfere. Marth was looking the other way, seemingly disinterested in what was going on.

"Come, come," Moose said, and reached out a dirty hand to touch her shoulder. "You ain't gonna be unfriendly, are you?"

Laura jerked away from him. She wished that she hadn't come. If this man was an example of what she must accept, Raan would have been preferable.

"I don't know you, and I don't like you," she said, but the anger she tried to show melted into fear. "I wish you'd go away."

At the same time Marth stepped close to the bar and said in a low voice: "The lady said for you to scram, Moose. You understand?"

Moose stood up very slowly. He could feel the comforting, slim blade of his knife, hidden in the folds of his sleeve.

"And how long since you've been the boss?" he sneered. "Women are free on Starn."

Marth's voice didn't rise.

"Not any more they ain't," he said. "The lady says scram and you get moving, now."

Moose didn't have to think to use a knife. His arm went up swiftly and shot out straight. There was a shattering of glass as the mirror behind Marth broke and the knife thudded into the wood. Laura uttered no sound. Her lips parted and she watched with fascinated eyes as the blade quivered and the handle vibrated back and forth.

Marth's hand came down against the bar with a crash: The heavy glass broke cleanly in two. Moving with deliberate calmness, Marth's arm went aloft. The sharp glass shot through the air like a knife, and hit Moose square in the face. With a blubbing scream he sank to the floor. His hands went to his face and came away dripping with blood.

Marth never moved from behind the bar. He picked up the remainder of the glass and dropped it on the floor behind him.

Moose tried to stand up but he was blinded. The entire front of his face was caved in. He sank forward on the floor and lay still. Blood spilled on the floor and widened into a pool.

L AURA continued to stare until she felt Marth's hand on her arm.

"You better get out the back way," he said quietly. "Go two blocks south and find a house that has just been painted white. The woman who called herself the Duchess is living there. She has been here for a long time and is married. She will take care of you."

Laura stumbled to the door, then turned and looked up at him with wide, frightened eyes. The fright was not for herself.

"What—will they do to you?"

Marth grinned.

"It don't matter much. He was a rat."

"But, Marth . . ." His name sounded strange from her lips.

He gave her a startled glance.

"It's been a long time since anyone besides Tiny called me Marth," he said haltingly.

Laura blushed.

"You—were very brave and strong," she said, and turned away from him.

Marth stared after her, then someone touched him on the shoulder. He pivoted to face one of the men who had been playing cards.

"The boss wants to speak to you, Marth," the miner said. "I guess he's pretty mad."

Marth nodded.

"Luck hates murder," he said. "I guess even in self defense, he won't like the way I messed Noose up."

The miner nodded.

"Things haven't changed for the boss like they have for the rest of us. He's still pretty bitter about all this business of marriage."

Marth entered the office at Mine One, and walked slowly toward Goodman Luck's desk. Luck spent his afternoons here, because Mine One was his richest find, and he liked to feel that it was under personal supervision.

Luck had heard of the Noose's death by grape-vine. He had expected it to happen for months, and under different circumstances, he would have forgiven Marth, even congratulated him.

But Luck was bitter. Especially since the Noose had told him Tiny was hiding in Marth's shack. Deep inside, Luck was seething with anger, and yet he had a hard time to lay his finger on the reason for it. He knew that Tiny had played some sort of a game with him and he had lost. Now Marth was her accomplice and Luck felt Stara and the city of Starn slipping from his grasp and being taken over by a slim mystery girl.

He had verified the fact that Tiny was at the shack, and then decided to

do nothing about it. Now, he saw a chance to punish Marth to save his own face.

MARTH waited nervously for him to look up. Several miners stood outside, in the hot, dusty entrance to the mine. The windows of the shack were open. Luck smiled grimly, knowing they could hear every word. He raised his voice when he spoke.

"Marth, I hear there was a little trouble down at the saloon?"

Marth swallowed. He had always thought a lot of the boss. Somehow, though, Luck had changed in the last few weeks.

"I—I had a fight with Noose," Marth said.

Luck frowned.

"Knifed him, didn't you?"

Marth's face flamed.

"I did not, sir. He tried to bury his blade in me and I hit him with a broken glass. I didn't mean to kill him."

Luck held up his hand.

"Never mind the alibis," he said. "You murdered Noose."

"In self defense, sir," Marth pleaded. "Any of them will tell you..."

"Enough," Luck snapped. "Perhaps I could have forgiven you if this had taken place a year ago."

The miners were drifting closer to the window. Quite a crowd of them were within hearing distance.

"But Noose insulted a lady, Mr. Luck."

Luck chuckled. It was a brittle, unpleasant sound.

"Yes, I understand that," he said. "And indirectly, that's just why you'll have to be punished."

It would be hard to guess if Marth's sudden frown was from anger or bewilderment.

"I don't think I understand."

Luck leaned back in his chair and rolled a pencil between his fingers. He stared absently out of the window.

"Before law and order came to Stara, and the city of Starn," he said, "this incident would have been overlooked. However, the pressure that my men, and certain women, have put on me, has made Starn a law abiding community."

There was a tinge of sarcasm in his voice.

"Therefore, in a city where the home is sacred and law must prevail, a crime like murder must be properly tried in court."

Marth knew that he was being made a fool of.

"You must be joking, sir," he protested. "There ain't no courts here. We don't have a judge."

"Let me worry about that." Luck stood up. "I'll be the judge and the jury. You've all been demanding justice. Now I demand it. You can have your freedom until I call you to court. I'll trust you not to try to escape."

"I ain't running away," he said in a low voice.

"Good," Luck said. "A notice will be posted giving the time and place of the trial. I'll take care of the justice, and you can depend on as fair a trial as any killer ever got."

STARN had no courthouse, and so, for the past two hours, a good share of the population had been crowded into the loft over Marth's saloon. The room had no windows and the door was so crowded that air had little chance to enter or escape. Luck sat behind a table at the end of the room. The others sat on benches, and suffered the heat and the anger they had to control.

The trial had not gone well. It had been chiefly an oration by Goodman

Luck. Marth, almost wishing that the boss would pronounce his death sentence and cut short the trial, sat stiffly at the right of the judge's table. In the front row were several of Starn's newly married couples. The minister who had been imported from earth, Laura Arru, whose eyes never left Marth, and Tiny.

Luck felt Tiny's eyes on him throughout the miserable, hot afternoon. He hadn't dared look at her, but his entire speech had been given for her benefit. He reminded them all that Stara and its one city, had been peaceful enough before the "missionaries" stuck their feminine noses into his domain. He shouted that Noose had committed no crime different than dozens of men had, before these "nice" women came. He pointed to Laura Arru and asked in a loud voice if she was so good that she was worth the death of one of his men.

Teena could stand his insults no longer. She and she alone was the one responsible for them all being here.

She sprang to her feet. Her eyes blazed and all the temper that had remained inside her, broke into hot words.

"You — you addle brained, jealous busy-body." Her eyes blazed. "Who do you think you are to tell a whole city what it can and cannot do?"

"Shut up and sit down," Luck shouted. "I'm handling this."

Teena was shaking from head to foot.

"You *were* handling it," she cried. "Now I'm going to say what I want to and sit down when I'm through. You ask if my sister is worth the life of a man?"

Luck's eyes widened.

"Your sister?"

"Yes, Laura is my sister," Teena said heatedly.

"You've been the ring leader of this

whole mess," he accused. "I told you to get out."

"And I had the nerve to fight back," she said. "That's why you're taking your revenge against an innocent man. You haven't the nerve to fight with a woman."

She expected Luck to defend himself. She definitely did *not* expect the sudden broad grin that lighted up his face. The others saw it and wondered.

"That's your story?" he asked gently.

"It is." She was stiff with anger. "And I defy you to murder Marth, even though you call it justice. You know Noose was a rat. You know he tried to kill Marth first. Marth's attack was in self defense."

Luck continued to smile. Everyone but Teena seemed to sense the change. She caught her breath.

"You evade the point," Luck said. "You say I can't handle a woman?"

She looked puzzled.

"I do!"

HE WAS out of his chair and across the room in one swift bound. In an instant he had taken her by the arm, twirled her around and kissed her crushingly on the lips.

At first she tried to struggle. Then, as the sounds in the room became long drawn sighs of relief, she relaxed and lay quietly in his arms. At last he pushed her from him, holding her at arm's length.

"Say it again," he challenged.

She shook her head and pushed the hair back out of her eyes. She was blushing furiously.

"I will not—not here."

Marth was on his feet. Luck turned to face him.

"You big horse," he said good naturedly. "Did you actually think I'd punish you for killing Noose? If you

hadn't, I'd have been forced to shoot him myself in a little while."

"Wait a minute," Teena cried. "This—was all an act?"

Luck grinned.

"I had to find out just where *you* stood," he said. "I—hoped you loved me enough to worry a little about me."

"But—we were quarreling," she protested. "I said some terribly mean things."

Luck grinned happily.

"I know," he admitted. "You were afraid I'd make a fool of myself, and you tried to prevent it. As long as a woman fights with a man, she loves him. Otherwise she wouldn't care enough about him to pay attention to *what* he did."

A messenger came from the back of the court and leaned over Mr. Messenger, the space-port manager.

"Can I stay here, then?" Marth asked. "Can I have my job back?"

"On one condition," Luck said. "The minister is going to marry Teena Arru and Goodman Luck. You'll have to marry her sister Laura, because you've sort of pledged yourself to look after her."

Laura stood up. Her soft, gentle eyes were on Marth. They were filled with tears.

The giant turned toward her. His mouth was open. He couldn't speak.

"You—uh—I—that is . . .?"

She nodded and went to him.

Mr. Messenger sprang to his feet at that instant and yelled loudly. He grabbed the minister by the sleeve and started to drag him toward the door.

"Hey, wait a minute," Luck shouted.

"Now is as good a time as . . ."

"Can't wait." Mr. Messenger continued to pull. "The Duchess is gonna have a baby. He's the only man on Stara who knows what to do."

"A baby . . ." Teena gasped.

"A baby . . ." The cry went around the room.

"And the first one on Stara," Luck said. "By golly, we'll *all* go along and give the little fellow a hand."

Teena smiled and placed a hand on his shoulder. Messenger was already gone, shouting the news as he charged down the stairs and into the street. Luck looked into Teena's eyes.

"You'd better stay here," she said softly. "I started all this. Perhaps I'd better help finish it. The wedding can wait—for a few hours."

Luck kissed her on the forehead. He turned, smiling happily at Marth, who had already anchored a huge arm around Laura's waist.

"For a few hours," he said. "And then we'll tell the Duchess *our* good news."

"I'll tell the Duchess that the last tyrant on Stara has been tamed," Teena said; "and that Goodman Luck will be a gentleman from now on."

Luck grinned.

"The last tyrant has been tamed," he promised.

THE MUMMY DOCTOR

IT TOOK Julio Tello, native of Peruvian soil, a lifetime to add to the meagre store of knowledge we have of the wonders of the past on the South American continent. In Peru, one of the richest archeological fields for discovery in the Americas, Dr. Tello and his fellow scientists have been laboring for years.

A world authority on Peruvian archaeology, Tello was born in an isolated Indian village far up in the Andes mountains. Curiously his first steps toward the work of an archaeologist were taken quite by accident. The ancient Peruvians were known to have performed bone operations on the skull. A scientist of Lima, who was studying this matter, wanted a collection of Indian skulls, and he appealed to Julio's father to assist him. With the curiosity of an inquisitive child, Julio became interested in these ancient bones which had once housed the brains of a gifted civilization.

The young Julio was educated in Lima, the capital of the nation, at great expense and sacrifice on the part of his family. But the boy showed great promise and his father was ambitious for him. With the purpose of preparing himself to learn more about the life of his ancestors, he earned the degrees of Bachelor Medicine, Doctor of Medicine, and later, Doctor of Science. His preparation included a period of study on fellowships at Harvard University and at the University of Berlin. With all this preparatory work behind him, Dr. Julio Tello was able to conduct very valuable studies and investigations of the ruins found in his own country.

The riches of ancient cities buried deep in the heart of dense and almost impenetrable forests have been opened up for study. When the con-

cealing materials have been removed the history of the life of the people who built and lived there is revealed. Scientists and the workers they direct dig patiently among the ruins, guarding with care the fragments of tools and weapons which may be found. In these utensils can be discovered many secrets. From them Tello has been able to connect dates and discoveries, establish the attainments of certain arts and sciences which have told him a great deal about the people who once created and used those tools.

The work which requires the most skill is the unwrapping of mummies which have been unearthed from ancient graves. Dr. Tello requires the assistance of three persons when he begins such an operation. One performs the actual work of removing the layers of cloth. Dr. Tello observes closely the material of the cloth, its color, patterns, and how it was woven. The religious articles and implements which have been buried with it are carefully considered. A stenographer takes careful notes of the whole proceeding. Photographs are taken at various stages of the unwrapping, until the very last stage when the shriveled body of an ancient royal prince is revealed.

Dr. Tello's discoveries in the ruins at Tiahuanaco and Macchu-Picchu have attracted world-wide attention. Although it has consumed almost an entire lifetime, Dr. Tello and scientists like him are aware that only the surface has been scratched. They are all bent on ascertaining from where these early people came and when . . . secrets which still lay buried. The riddle of early America still remains unanswered, but scientists are traveling closer and closer on the road toward discovery.

—Sandy Miller.



Vignettes OF FAMOUS SCIENTISTS

By ALEXANDER BLADE

GROVE KARL GILBERT

ONE of the greatest contributions to the wealth of information we now have of this amazing country of ours was made by a simple farm boy who grew up to be a geologist. His name was Grove Karl Gilbert, and thanks to his travels and investigations we now have quite a complete knowledge of the geology of the West. His search for facts took him over thousands of miles of desert and mountainous land.

Gilbert was born in 1843 on a farm near Rochester, New York. When very young he showed an interest in the world of nature, an interest that was heartily encouraged by his father. At nineteen he graduated from college; the tall awkward boy was now set adrift to make his way alone. He tried teaching but found that it did not satisfy his scientific yearnings. Later he did outstanding work preparing specimens for museum collections. During 1867 and 1868 he restored and mounted the skeleton of an Ice Age mastodon found near Cohoes Falls. It is still on exhibition in the New York State Museum. In attempting to establish the probable age of the animal by studying the surrounding rocks and soil in which it was found, Gilbert became interested in the subject of geology and decided to pursue that profession.

In 1871 Gilbert headed West as the chief geologist of Lieutenant Wheeler's expedition called "Geographical Surveys West of the One Hundred Meridian" on government reports. Gilbert spent eight months in almost constant movement roaming the country. He traveled across desert basins and ranges to California, to Arizona's plateaus, and even into Utah the following year.

The expedition was undertaken during the days when the West was yet wild and woolly, when towns were mining camps or stage stations, where whisky, poker, and billiards were the only means of recreation. But the reconstruction of land formations kept the scientists busy from dawn till dusk. They examined the results of volcanic eruptions on the land, and drew maps illustrating their activity.

In 1879 Gilbert did most of his work in and around Salt Lake City where he took charge of the investigations in the Great Basin. Its ancient lakes were his chief concern. Gilbert examined the steep banks and level terraces found encircling the lesser mountain ranges in the region. He concluded that they were made by waves, and

outlined a vanished body of water which he claimed had once covered twenty thousand square miles.

Gilbert was sure that this lake had been a remnant of the Ice Age. The lake had been at least nine hundred feet deep, received dissolved salts from the rivers which led into it, and lost water only by evaporation. His reconstructed history of the lake told of a time when the entire basin was dried up by warm winds, and then when it was full once more—a result of the damper climate which came from the glaciers forming on the mountain peaks. At last the lake overflowed to the north, swiftly slicing its own way through the toughly resisting limestone. There the water stood level for many years until its evaporation brought it down to lower and lower levels. Only the Great Salt Lake and a few tiny surrounding lakes remain to indicate the once immense body of water which had covered the land.

For Gilbert, this investigation held an endless fascination. In other parts of the country he made equally interesting discoveries. He traced the early stages of the Great Lakes, which had also resulted from Ice Age formations. Gilbert showed how the earth's rotation influenced streams, and he developed a method of dating fossils found in lake beds. He studied the rate of recession of Niagara Falls, and devised an explanation for rings of mountains on the moon. Since he was on the government's payroll most of the time, some of his work caused a great deal of heated discussion in Congress. There were many who thought the study of the moon a useless pastime.

A list of the discoveries that Gilbert has made deal with subjects ranging all the way from ancient ice sheets to blisters of molten rock. The most profound observation this great scientist made, the one to which all later men working in this field are so greatly indebted, is the theory that land always changes in rational ways and with rational results. Geology is a predictable science, one with definite causes and effects. Given certain conditions, the scientist can predict what changes are bound to occur on the face of and under the face of the earth. Grove Karl Gilbert was one of the greatest contributors to the development of this science, the science of physiography.

Dual Personality

By **ROG PHILLIPS**

"I OFTEN wonder, in the back of my mind, if there really is such a thing as insanity?" Dr. Underwood hitched further down into his chair, pointing his pipe in the general direction of the half dozen guests immediately in front of him, and stabbed the air violently with it as he spoke.

"Oh, don't get me wrong, I admit there are certain physical disorders that are symptomatic of various mental derangements, and there are definitely minds that never developed beyond the stage of infancy. In other words, I must admit that there are brains that do not function properly, just as there



His body was normal enough, but there
wasn't room in it for two persons.
And both of them wanted to stay



are car motors that have something wrong with them. But the large body of so called insane people are not of that type, as all of you must know."

Raising his pipe in readiness for further stabs, and cocking his head at an angle like a listening dog, which he very much resembled with his neatly trimmed beard, he continued.

"I mean that large body of criminally insane, incurable drunkards, split personalities,—uh, people who hear voices, people who are insane on religion, and, well,—all those whom we call 'mad'."

Having hitched himself almost entirely off the chair, Dr. Underwood pulled himself into an upright position so he could start his hitching process all over again. Puffing violently on his pipe he glared through his thick-lensed glasses at his audience, which had now increased to include the full two dozen guests of his host. At exactly the right instant he proceeded.

"In my twenty-three years at the state hospital I have observed thousands of cases of every description. Sometimes I wonder if—well, if the fundamental postulates, if I might call them that, of the profession of psychiatry might be entirely wrong. You see, we take a materialistic attitude. For example, if a man hears voices all the time and no one else can hear them we say he is mad. Why? Because we assume that there ARE no voices. We assume that his mind is no longer able to distinguish between fact or memory or fact and pure fancy. But suppose there WERE voices that he could hear but no one else near him could. Then we could not say that he was mad, because he would be stating a fact when he claimed he heard voices.

"Then again, a woman whose name is Mary Jones has 'spells' when she claims she is not Mary Jones, but is someone named Elena Crapopolis. We call her

mad. But suppose during those 'spells' she actually is this Elena Crapopolis?"

The doctor paused again and glanced speculatively around at his audience. "Of course you know what I am driving at. Some of you believe there is something in addition to this material body. Something that lives after death and retains the memories and perhaps even the intelligence of the mortal man. There are all sorts of tales about reincarnation, devil possession, and so on. All of these have to be ignored by the professional psychiatrist or he might go mad himself. But suppose he were wrong to ignore the possibility of these things being true? Suppose they are true? Then the proper procedure in the cure of a so-called 'mad' person would be to attack the spirit that made him mad and drive it away. Not put him in a cell and perhaps a straight jacket. Perhaps that might still be necessary. I don't know. There are lots of things I don't know. But I do know that our treatment of the mentally ill is for the most part inadequate. Entirely inadequate. Perhaps we should treat patients with a little more of the dignity due any normal, free human being, and make more of an attempt to understand the individual case. Perhaps we should not be so quick to brand as insane any act or statement of a patient just because it is not a normal one."

A FARAWAY look came into the doctor's eyes. Absentmindedly he knocked his pipe against the ashtray beside his chair to empty it. Then pulling his tobacco pouch out of his coat pocket he slowly filled it again and resumed talking.

"I remember a case about ten years ago. Perhaps it was not the first case that made me doubt. There may have been others before that that bothered

me. But this particular case I have in mind—I'll tell you about it if you care to listen and let you see for yourself what I mean when I say that perhaps we are wrong, and that there really is no such thing as insanity."

Receiving exclamations to continue from all sides, the doctor, smiling, lit his pipe, settled down in his chair a trifle farther, and began his story.

"As I said before, it was about ten years ago, July the twenty-third, nineteen thirty-five at two o'clock in the afternoon, to be exact, that there was a knock on the door of my office at the hospital, and the nurse came in with the papers of commitment for a new patient. His name was James Higlin. She informed me he had just been taken to the receiving ward and was in a straight-jacket. I went down to see him.

"James Higlin was a young man, not more than twenty-five or six years of age, blond, and around six feet. The record stated he was married to a Winifred Higlin, twenty-three, no children. All this, of course, is not interesting, but is part of the necessary background to the case. His particular form of insanity was a new one to me at that time. It was a recurring amnesia which had developed to the stage where a definite personality separate from his own was beginning to develop and becoming manifest during the attacks of amnesia."

He puffed contentedly for a moment and then went on. "Yes, a definite personality. A dangerous one in some ways. It went by the name of Jack Kilgore. This new personality was very clever. Jack Kilgore knew that he was not the rightful owner of his body, so to speak, and when he held control he cashed large checks to the account of James Higlin, being very careful that

no trace of where the money went was left in the clothing, so that if James Higlin came back to his body unexpectedly he might find them. Being totally irresponsible Jack soon depleted the resources of James to the point where he began to steal to obtain the money he wanted. That is the way he got caught. And the man I met in the straight-jacket that afternoon was not James Higlin, but was Jack Kilgore. A very mad, a very furious Jack Kilgore. Full of vile language and straining at the garment which held his arms pinned securely to his sides. His eyes as they met mine were flashing with hate. A frothy foam was on his lower lip, and I am quite sure that if he could have broken loose from the cot to which he was strapped he would have killed me, and the two assistants as we stood there observing him."

JAMES HIGLIN was a very happy and a very lucky young man. And that is just what he was thinking as he strode briskly along on his way to the office. At twenty-four he was already a promising architect. Three of the newest office buildings in downtown Seattle had been designed by him. And two of the new housing projects had used his blue prints. At the age of twenty-one he had started in as a draftsman with his firm, and in the three years since then he had risen to an office of his own with his name on the door and a salary of four hundred a month. Now he was living in a house of his own design and had been married for over six months.

But he had one disquieting thought. "If only I didn't get those strange headaches. If they keep on maybe I had better go see a doctor."

Then suddenly he blinked his eyes in amazement, and gave his head a violent jerk. He wasn't on the sidewalk, walk-

ing to work. It wasn't even morning. It was evening, and this was a crowded bus he was standing in! The transition was sudden,—like the changing of scenes in a movie, yet there was the vague memory of something. Something? What was it? Almost he could remember. Catching the eye of the man standing next to him, Jimmy asked, "Say, fella, what day is this?"

"Why, ah,—it's Wednesday, June twenty-first," was the reply.

Jimmy sighed with relief. "Thank God for that," he muttered to himself. It was still the same day.

A VAST gnawing headache pounded into his soul. His eyes were blurred. "*Something must have gone wrong with the hot seat. I should be dead by now,*" he muttered. "*That's a laugh. Something's wrong with the hot seat! I wonder what the law is on that. That damn shyster would be too dumb to know about that, too.*"

Suddenly he realized he wasn't sitting in the hot seat at all, but was standing on the sidewalk someplace, swaying like a drunk. He didn't know what it was all about but he couldn't just stand there, so he started walking. The headache left abruptly.

"Huh," he thought, "*Me—*" But then he couldn't remember *who* he was! What had he been thinking about?

He looked at the things around him, hoping to find something familiar to cling to. The houses were strange. Even the name of the street, Yesler, seemed strange. No! It *was* vaguely familiar!

A half hour of walking brought him to Ninth and Yesler, overlooking the Skidrow district of Seattle. His eyes devoured the view. This was home. The Smith Tower, and the King Street Station were beacon lights to his fogged brain. He broke into a fast trot down the steep remaining blocks that separ-

ated him from his old haunts. And with each step memory returned.

Reaching Third Avenue, he turned left and in a few seconds was going down the steps to the Casino, a basement pool room, card room and restaurant. He was well known around here. He was sure to run into someone he knew. Then he saw Lefty over at the nickel-chip stud table. He strode over, caught Lefty's eye, grinned, and said, "Hi, Lefty."

Lefty glanced at him with a slight frown of puzzlement, then smiled vaguely and answered with a half-hearted, "Hi, kid." Then he returned to an inspection of his holecard, and a shrewd scrutiny of the Filipino who had raised him five dollars on a pair of deuces in sight.

So Lefty had forgotten him during the year he had been gone. So what? He turned away and went over to the counter and ordered a cup of coffee. Then he glanced idly in the mirror that went the full length of the counter, on the wall.

"That's funny," he thought. "Where am I? I can't see my face in the mirror. Huh!" And a face he had never seen before in any mirror chuckled when he did. He raised his right hand slowly. A strange hand appeared above the counter in the mirror and went slowly with his. He stopped his arm in mid air. The hand in the mirror stopped at the same instant. Slowly comprehension was dawning on that strange face in the mirror and in his mind. He whistled a soft, inaudible note.

"No wonder Lefty didn't recognize me," he thought. It was characteristic of him that he had not turned a hair at his discovery! After all, he had killed several men before he had been finally convicted of one murder. And he had lived by his wits for so long that his

nerves were of iron.

Glancing furtively around he began to search through his pockets. A wallet came to light. In it were three ten dollar bills, a five, and a one. Also a fistfull of identification cards. Registration, draft, business, etc. So he was James Higlin!

HIS coffee came and he gulped a couple of swallows. It burned his throat, but he didn't mind. He went on with his search. A check book came to light. The balance was quite a tidy one. He gulped the rest of his coffee, tossed a dime on the counter from the loose change in his trouser pocket, and strode rapidly out of the place.

Hurrying up Third Avenue he soon came to Pike Street. He turned right, went up to Fourth, turned right again, and went into the bank in the middle of the block. The doorman smiled in greeting and said, "Good morning, Mr. Higlin."

"Good morning," he replied. "This is a laugh," he thought to himself. He went to the writing table in the center of the bank and, pulling out his check-book, wrote a check for five hundred dollars. His writing was strange to him. He smiled to himself. It must be that of Jimmy.

He came out of the bank with ten, crisp fifty dollar bills tucked away in his wallet and a satisfied expression on his face. "Tomorrow morning I think I'll close out 'my' account, just to be safe," he thought.

Going up Pike Street, he stopped at a bar and ordered a beer. The girl who served it smiled at him, so when she held out her hand for the money he took it in his own and squeezed it.

Pulling her hand free as tactfully as she could she said, "Mr. Higlin! This isn't a bit like you."

"Why does everybody call me Mr.

Higlin?" he asked. "I must look like that guy, huh?" Pulling out his wallet he skipped over the twenties and handed her a new fifty dollar bill.

"What's your name, sweetheart?" She smiled at him speculatively and leaned over the counter. "My name's Mable."

He rose, smiled knowingly, and said, "O.K., Mable, I'll be seeing you later."

Leaving the beer parlor he hesitated as to which way to go. "Guess I'll try Dago Mike's," he muttered.

In the middle of the block on Eighth he went up a short flight of steps to an iron door with a small window in it backed by a plywood cover which opened as he pressed the buzzer to the left of the door. A hard face regarded him.

He grinned at it and said, "Lefty sent me." There was a click and the door opened.

Passing the doorman he continued up the flight of stairs to the second floor and entered a large room. In it were many dice tables,—Chukaluck, Four Five Six, Craps, two Blackjack tables, and in a far corner a poker game in progress. Gathered around each table were office workers, salesmen, laborers, and just bums, with a few women,—stenographers, and wayward housewives scattered among them.

Elbowing his way through the crowd to one of the tables he said in a loud voice, "Make way for a real player. Whose got those peanuts? How much is in the bank?"

"Twenty dollars left in the bank," said the dummy, grinning. "Want it?"

He covered it, and a cigar chewing fat man, his shirt damp with perspiration, shook the cup violently and tossed out the dice.

"And a one-two-three," called the dummy. "Our loud mouther friend, fresh off the street, now owns the bank."

How much is the bank, pal?" he asked, smiling cheerfully at him." You know, you remind me for some reason of Jack Kilgore, although I don't know why you should. He just got the hot seat yesterday."

"That's who I am," he thought excitedly, "Jack Kilgore!"

Six hours later he left Dago Mike's with eight hundred dollars in his wallet. He started to look for a room.

DURING that six hours he had done a lot of thinking. His memory had come back completely. He was convinced he had actually been killed in the electric chair, but that somehow, by some strange freak of chance, his soul had come back to occupy the body of James Higlin. For how long, he did not know, but being a man who overlooked no angles, he intended to stay if possible. But if he couldn't stay permanently he intended to put up a battle with Higlin for his body, and to do this he must have a room where he could store up a supply of cash and create a plan of operation.

He knew just the place he wanted. A private and exclusive apartment in the University District, where he could come and go unquestioned, and be away weeks at a time without anyone snooping. So, catching a bus he rode out and located the apartment he wanted.

Next in order was clothes. The stores in the district supplied him with everything he desired. Dining in Weisman's Restaurant, he read the evening paper and chuckled over the brief notice of his execution.

When he left the restaurant it was getting dark, so he caught a bus to go back downtown. After he got on he remembered his eight hundred dollars and hopped off again, returning to his apartment and hiding all except fifty. Then he caught another bus, and, stand-

ing in the crowded aisle, started to hum softly to himself, "but when, I grow, to o-old to dream—"

STOOPING and peering out the windows of the bus, Jimmy Higlin saw that he was on Eastlake headed toward town, so he stayed on the bus. He tried to think where the day had gone, but his memory of it was a perfect blank.

What would he say to Winny? What *could* he say. Never in their married life had he been late coming home without calling her. And what would the office say? He had never missed a day at the office without letting them know. But maybe he *had* been at the office. Maybe he *had* called Winny. He couldn't remember.

"I'll bluff it through some way," he thought. "I mustn't let on that I can't remember anything that happened today. Winny would be worried if she knew."

Reaching the downtown district he got off the bus and found a phone. Calling his wife he apologized for being late and promised to be right home. And then, cautiously, "Anything happen worth mentioning today, honey?" He held his breath while waiting for her answer.

"Nothing, except that the office called to ask why you weren't there. I told them I didn't know and that you had left home at the usual time to go to work. I've been worried sick, darling. Where were you?"

"Tell you when I get home," he mumbled. "By, darling." He hung up with beads of cold perspiration on his brow. He would have to do some fast thinking on the way home. Almost—he decided to tell her the truth. Then he shook his head. No, he would wait and keep quiet. If it didn't happen again there was no need of making mountains out of mole hills.

Arriving home he skipped up the front steps with forced lightheartedness, whistling an off key tune and opened the front door with a carefree, "Hi, honey. Gee you look beautiful."

Winifred interrupted his act and said, "Hurry, Jimmy. Have you forgotten we are going out tonight?"

"Oh, yes . . . Of course. We *are* going over to the Robinsons for bridge tonight."

A quick shower and fresh clothes set him right with the world again. He was grateful for the date with the Robinsons. Perhaps he wouldn't have to do any explaining to Winny.

He was a poor bridge player that night. Over and over the question kept pounding into his brain, "Where was I all day?" And once a vision rose up in his mind of a strange landscape. Trees that reached to the sky and huge boulders, large as buildings. Under one of the boulders several men and a girl were crouching, as if they were hiding from something." The vision vanished when he felt a sharp pain in his shin bone. Winny had kicked him under the table. "Your play, Jimmy boy."

"By the way, Jimmy," Bob Robinson spoke up, as Jimmy played a card. "I saw you in the bank today. Spoke to you but you didn't hear me, I guess."

"Was I?" Jimmy asked eagerly. "I mean, what time was that?"

"About ten thirty this morning," replied Bob.

"Oh, yes," Jimmy said, as if he knew all about it. "I guess I didn't see you. I had a lot on my mind about that time."

Jimmy's mind started to hum, "So I was in the bank! What was I doing there? Did I cash a check? I'd better find out." And then aloud, "Will you excuse me a moment, folks?"

He rose and went to the bathroom. There he pulled out his check book and

opened it. A check was missing, but no entry was made on the stub. He pulled out his wallet. He had had thirty-six dollars in it that morning. Now there was fifty! And it was two twenties and a ten, whereas it had been three tens, a five and a one this morning! Pocketing his checkbook and wallet he returned thoughtfully to the bridge table.

Forcing into the background of his mind the many puzzling things that were bothering him, Jimmy concentrated on the game and managed somehow to get through the evening without being kicked on the shins again.

In bed that night he lay awake for a long time, puzzling, puzzling, puzzling. As the first rays of morning sunlight crept into the room he fell asleep.

A WEEK went by with nothing happening. Each day Jimmy grew more confident that nothing would happen. Two weeks. Three. Then it was Wednesday morning of the fourth week. If it had not been for the five hundred dollars missing from his bank account and the cancelled check with his signature on it he would have completely forgotten that day.

He left home the same as usual and started to walk to work. He was happy. Yesterday he had completed the plans for the new city warehouse and turned them over to the contractor who was to build it. Another building he could call his own. He looked on each building which he had designed as his own special property. A child of his own brain.

He began to hum in a soft undertone, as he strode briskly along Yesler. And as before it was, "And when, I grow, too o-old to dream."

Suddenly he fell over backwards and landed sprawling on a dirty, sour smelling floor.

Dr. Underwood paused in his narrative and peered intently at his audience through his glasses. Then he continued. "You can appreciate the emotions that surged through his bewildered brain. One instant he was in the healthy morning sunlight on a clean, pleasant street. With no apparent time lapse he found himself on the floor of a secret, dirty, basement gambling room looking up at the course, stupid faces of a motley group of perhaps the most sinister characters he had ever seen—all grinning in amusement at his discomfort and the evident bewilderment on his face."

* * *

"What's the matter, Jack, did that fifty dollar raise of mine bowl you over?" The emaciated Eurasian who spoke, tittered nervously. He was bluffing and wasn't sure but that this might be some trick of the man to stall and make him give himself away. A few of the others laughed hollowly at the pun. But for the most part their expressions did not change, for they were men to whom life and death, good fortune and bad, were nothing. The never ending succession of poker hands, day after day, relieved only by an occasional hasty meal, or a few short hours of sleep, and interrupted only when lack of funds made necessary a foray into the world on the street above, had dulled their emotions beyond the point where they could find amusement in anything the sickly Eurasian could possibly say.

Jimmy rose slowly, forcing his bewilderment and horror into the background of his mind, and letting a mechanical grin cover his rapid survey of the room and its occupants. He looked down at the table where he stood and saw a pile of chips and five cards, one of them face down. A queen, ten, six, and a deuce faced up. Ignoring

his fallen chair he glanced over the round, canvas covered table. In the center were a couple of handfuls of white, red, blue, and yellow chips. A neat stack of ten yellow chips were on the opposite side of the table, in front of the Eurasian's cards, the only other poker hand in evidence. The cards facing up were an ace, ten, five, and a four spot.

Jimmy looked into the small, black eyes of the now very nervous Eurasian and, without looking at his hole-card, slowly shoved ten yellows from his own stack out into the center, and then with a muttered, "raise," counted out twenty more yellow chips very slowly, grinning as he did so, and started to push them into the center.

The Eurasian, with a quick, violent motion scooped up his cards and threw them into the discards, muttering in his own language, his eyes glaring hatefully at Jimmy. Jimmy's vacant grin remained as he shoved all his chips to the cashier and said, "Cash me in." He stood silent as his chips were counted, and accepted the money, eight hundred and sixty-five dollars, without a word. Then, turning, he made his way through the crowd to the nearest door. On the other side was a lavatory which had not seen a janitor in weeks. Almost vomiting at the smell, he backed out and, looking around, discovered the only other door. Passing through it he climbed the paper littered stairs to the dark alleyway and, almost running, was soon on the well lighted sidewalk of the street.

ONLY then did he allow his mind to think of what had happened. What time was it? A glance at his wristwatch showed him that it was ten-thirty. The supple sky told him it was evening. What day was it? Hurrying to the nearest corner he bought a paper.

"Three whole days!" he exclaimed to himself in growing horror. He did not look at the headlines. They were: "Theatre Robbed in Broad Daylight, Cashier Slain." And underneath in smaller type, "Witnesses describe killer. Arrest expected by police."

He whistled silently. "What *would* Winny say now? She'll probably leave me!" She might have listened to the truth the first time, but *now!*

"I know. I'll get drunk and pretend I'm even more drunk than I am. Maybe she will be so glad to see me that she will believe I've been drunk all this time. Then maybe she'll forgive me, and I won't have to explain." He felt the roll of bills in his pocket and grinned ruefully. "At least I've got that five hundred dollars back with interest," he thought.

Making his way into the nearest beer parlor he proceeded to gulp beer after beer until he was sure he had enough to make him quite drunk by the time he reached home. Then calling a taxi from the phone by the door he went out and stood on the curb until it came.

* * *

Stumbling up the front steps he fumbled at the door. It opened from within and Winny stood in the opening, relief lighting up her face, and then alarm as she saw his mussed clothing and became aware that he was swaying back and forth, barely able to stand. Then, as she caught a whiff of his breath she exclaimed, "Oh, Jimmy. You're drunk! How could you." She put her arm around his waist and helped him into the house, pushing him onto the davenport, and loosening his shirt collar. Then she went to the phone and called the police and told them her husband had come home and everything was all right.

He became dimly aware after awhile that he was between cool, clean sheets,

and there was a cool, damp cloth on his forehead. Then his troubled mind was stilled, and he slept as only one who is drugged by alcohol can sleep.

GEORGE MACPHERSON, otherwise known as Mac, sat at his desk in the homicide office of the Seattle Police Department. On that desk, side by side, were two sheets of paper. On the one was a picture and a typewritten description. On the other was merely a typewritten description.

The title of the sheet with the picture was Missing Persons Bureau. That of the other was Homicide Bureau.

The phone on his desk rang. Mac picked it up. He listened for a moment, then said, "O.K." and dropped the phone back on its cradle. Then he turned to three men sitting around another desk.

"All right, you guys. He came home last night. And he's still there. When we get there I'll give you time to get set. Be sure he can't get away from either side or the back. I'll go in from the front. Be ready to break in if you hear a shot or if I signal. Let's go."

The police car paused at the alley and the three men got out. Then it went on to the corner and stopped. Mac got out and walked slowly toward the house of James Higlin. The driver stayed in the car with the motor running, every sense alert for sudden movements or the sounds of shots.

Mac climbed the steps to the porch on his toes, ready to show his gun at the slightest sign of life. He was remembering that the witnesses had said the killer laughed when he shot the cashier. Laughed with the sheer enjoyment of killing. No one would do that unless they had killed many times before.

He hesitated for a moment at the door, then put his finger on the push-

button. He heard the sound of a chimes from inside. Then the door opened.

* * *

Jimmy awoke with a splitting headache. He sat up in bed. The sudden movement caused a spasm of pain in back of his eyes. He closed them slowly and groaned.

The groan brought Winny into the room. There was a tender, forgiving, half hopeful, half wistful smile on her face. Almost shyly she said, "Good morning, Jimmy." And her lower lip trembled when she said it.

At the sound of her voice his eyes opened. The vision of her standing there, so patient and ready to understand and help; so much a part of him and yet so far away. . . . He held out his arms and she came to him.

Her voice came, muffled. Her face buried in his neck. "Oh, Jimmy. Something's wrong. Won't you tell me what it is? I can help you. I want to help." She straightened up and put her hands on his cheeks, forcing him to look at her. And her lips quivered again as she said, "I'm your wife, Jimmy. Remember?" Then she smiled, and her very heart seemed to be in that smile.

"You're right, darling. I've got to tell you." Jimmy clutched her slim shoulders in his two hands. "I—," He hesitated and took a deep breath. "I can't remember." A note of hysteria came into his voice as he repeated, "I can't remember! One minute I'm on the way to work. The next I'm—," a note of puzzlement crept into his voice. "I'm someplace I've never been before!"

HE STRUGGLED out of bed and opened a window. The room had suddenly become stuffy and oppressive. And as he opened it the door chimes sounded from the downstairs hall. Winny, with a departing smile mur-

mured, "I'll be right back," left the room and tripped down the stairs to the door which had come open from the sudden draft when Jimmy opened the window upstairs.

A middle-aged man in a blue serge suit stood in the open doorway. There was a hard, alert glint in his eyes, and his right hand was in his coat pocket. "Good morning. Mrs. Higlin?" A jerky smile flitted over his face and vanished as abruptly as it came.

"Yes?"

"I'm Macpherson, from headquarters."

Alarm crept into her face as she said, "I'll tell him," and turning, ran up the stairs. Mac followed her as she entered the bedroom.

Jimmy, in the midst of lighting a cigaret, looked up.

"James Higlin?" Mac asked in a hard voice.

At Jimmy's nod Mac pulled his gun and said in a formal voice, "You are under arrest for the armed robbery and murder of the cashier of the Embassy Theater. It is my duty to warn you that anything you say may be used against you." Glancing at Jimmy's pajamas he added, "Get dressed. We're going down to headquarters."

To Jimmy the detective's words were a black, blank wall of horror. He did not comprehend the words, so much as their implication. He couldn't have done this thing! He tried to remember what he had been doing and where he had been during those days. His eyes sought to pierce the veil of forgetfulness. They looked past the detective, through the bedroom wall, and on and on into the infinite, unknown. Looking. Desperate. And suddenly he was standing on the edge of a high cliff overlooking a valley. A boulder strewn valley. Desolate and barren. At his side was a girl. In the back of his mind

he knew her. And behind and on either side of him were others, men and women, and he knew them. He was one of them. He tried to recall what had been troubling his mind just a second before. What was it? It wouldn't come back to him, so he shrugged his shoulders and concentrated on the enemy warriors in the valley below.

* * *

When Winny heard the words of the detective their meaning did not soak in at first. She looked at her husband, awaiting his reply in a politely interested way. But the meaning penetrated at the same time as she saw the change in Jimmy's face. She saw his mouth open in an amazed way, his eyes take on a faraway look, as if trying to see through the wall, and then, suddenly, it was no longer her Jimmy standing there, but a stranger. And at that same instant she realized the detective had said her Jimmy was arrested for murder. She fainted.

In falling she slumped sideways against Macpherson, and he instinctively tried to catch her. In that instant Jack Kilgore acted. In less than a second Mac was sprawled on the floor beside Winny. His gun was in Jack Kilgore's hand, and a confident smile was on Jack's face.

Mac looked up at the face of the killer. "You can't get away with this, Jimmy. My men are all around the place."

"Not Jimmy, Mac. Jimmy— isn't here." The mocking voice came in almost a whisper, and the hard, taunting eyes of the man above bored into Mac's. "Jack. Jack Kilgore. Remember me? I was— electrocuted a few weeks ago. Remember?" And he laughed, a cold, mirthless laugh. Suddenly Mac shivered.

"What are you going to do, Jimmy?" he asked. He was alert, watching for

the slightest chance to surprise this mad killer, and stalling for time.

"Get up and tear a sheet into strips and tie and gag the dame. You're going out of here with me and I don't want her messing things up." Jack grinned and licked his lips nervously. "At the first sign of trouble you get yours. And good. Understand? Get up." He stepped back, well away from the detective, the knuckle on his trigger finger white and every muscle in his body tensed for sudden action.

Mac got up, tore a sheet into strips and did as he was told. But his eyes never left the figure of Jimmy or Jack. His mind was in a turmoil. He couldn't believe what his reason told him **MUST** be the truth. It wasn't possible. And he would be plain crazy to repeat it to anyone.

With Winny bound and gagged and still unconscious, Jack jerked his gun in the direction of the door. Mac opened it and went slowly into the hall, his hands raised even with his head. He wasn't going to take any chances yet.

"When we get to the front door you will step out on the porch and wave for your driver to come in. If he asks why, tell him you want him to help you carry me to the car. You had to slug me," Jack said.

Mac decided to play it Jack's way for the time being. Sooner or later the time would come. So he stepped out on the porch and waved for the driver to come up. The driver, Jerry, unsuspecting, climbed out of the car and walked up the steps to the porch. "What's up, Mac?" he asked.

"Come inside, Jerry. I need your help," Mac answered, feeling like a Judas. He knew what was coming and that if he tried to stop it Jerry would be shot as well as himself.

Jerry stepped past him into the hall

and Mac followed, closing the door. He turned his back while closing the door. He didn't want to watch what happened. He heard a blow and the sound of Jerry falling, and winced. He stayed the way he was, knowing that he was safe. Jack's plan required him to remain on his feet, he knew.

In a couple of minutes he heard Jack's voice. "O.K., copper. Turn around." He turned slowly and looked at the unconscious figure of Jerry on the floor. It was sans trousers, coat and cap. And Jack was wearing them, his pajamas lying in a heap on the floor.

"You know, Mac, you're pretty smart!" Jack said. "Let's go upstairs now and get some clothes for your driver."

THEY opened the front door again in a matter of moments and picked up the unconscious form of Jerry, Jack taking the feet, with the gun hidden by Jerry's legs and pointed at the detective.

They marched down the steps to the police car. Mac knew that his men were watching, but there was no way he could signal that would not involve the certainty of at least one of his men being killed. So he played it safe. Perhaps at the car. . . . But no opportunity presented itself there. Soon he was in the driver's seat and Jack was sitting in back with his feet on the body of Jerry. "Get going now. And fast," he added as he saw the three men coming from the back of the house.

With a clash of gears the car lurched forward. The three men ran into the street and pulled their guns. Then put them back without a shot, staring after the car.

Meanwhile Jack had taken the gun of the driver, Jerry. The car had gone several blocks and was now in a quiet

side street. He ordered Mac to stop and get out. Then, dumping Jerry onto the pavement he got in front and drove away.

"This town is getting HOT," he said aloud to himself, and then laughed. He headed for the University District and drove at a moderate rate. Just then the radio came to life.

"Theatre bandit escaping in police car. License MX 513. He is armed. Cars eleven and twenty-six go to vicinity of Eastlake and Broadway. He is headed that way. That is all."

Jack cursed under his breath and pulled the car to the curb. Getting out he walked two blocks to a bus stop and caught a bus. As he got on he looked back and saw a police car pull to a halt beside the car he had just left.

After what seemed an eternity, the bus reached forty-third and he got off, making his way swiftly to his apartment. There he turned the radio on to the police wavelength and paced up and down, smoking cigaret after cigaret as he listened to the progress of the chase. Occasionally the sound of a siren wailed up from a distance, but none came close. Finally all was quiet. He sighed with relief and stretched out on the davenport to relax.

THE phone rang, the sound interrupting the quiet of the apartment with an unexpected and startling suddenness. The noise caused Jack to start up with alarm. He hesitated, wondering whether he dared to answer it. Then he remembered that only one person knew he lived here, and he rose, stepped over to the wall and lifted the receiver.

It was Mabel. Her voice came over the phone sleepily. "Hello, honey. Where were you last night? You were supposed to meet me after work, ré-

member?"

"Oh. Hello, kid. I couldn't make it. Something unexpected came up. Yeah. Unexpected." Then Jack's face lit up with an idea. "Listen, Mabel. Put on some clothes and hop over here in a hurry, will you? And on your way pick me up some breakfast."

"Breakfast?" she echoed.

"M-hm, breakfast. I had a hard night and haven't had anything to eat yet. A butterhorn and a pint of coffee will be O.K."

"O.K., Jacky boy. I'll get me some, too."

"Hurry it, kid. I want to talk to you." He hung up. Then he took off the clothes of the driver, grinning as he discovered a billfold with over two hundred dollars in it. Putting on a pair of blue slacks and a gabardine shirt of rich grey color, and shaving, he looked exactly like an adult college student. And with the university campus only two blocks away no one would ever notice him enough to connect him with the description of the theatre bandit. Nevertheless he wasn't going to take any chances for awhile.

As he finished shaving the door buzzer sounded. Then, before he could get to the door it opened and Mabel came in, her arms loaded with white paper sacks containing pastry and bottles of coffee.

MAC stood in the middle of the street beside the unconscious Jerry and watched the departing police car which contained the fleeing Jimmy Higlin. There was no evidence of disappointment on his face, only a look of concentration. He seemed oblivious of the condition of his fellow worker, intent only on the fleeing car. Even after it turned the corner to the right several blocks away he still watched to see if it would cut back

toward the downtown district farther down the street. Finally satisfied that it had not, he dragged Jerry to the curb and ran up the sidewalk to the door of the first house and pounded impatiently on the panel until the door was opened by an indignant housewife.

Ignoring her indignation and brushing past her into the living room he demanded, flashing his shield, "Where's your phone."

"Why, ah—" she stuttered. And then, beginning to realize there was an emergency she pointed toward the kitchen door which was open and said, "In there."

In three minutes Mac had called headquarters and started the radio cars in pursuit of the fugitive, got an ambulance on its way over to pick up Jerry, and another police car to pick up himself and his three men. Hanging up, he apologized to the woman for his rudeness and thanked her for the use of her phone. Then he returned to the street and examined Jerry's head.

There was a nasty cut in the scalp where the butt of the gun had crashed mercilessly. Jerry might be out for hours, and there might be bad effects.

The symphony of sirens which now began and grew in crescendo was dominated in a couple of minutes by the siren of the ambulance as it turned into the street and sped toward him. As it came to a stop at the curb, its siren moaned into silence, to be replaced by the wail of the coming police car, only a few blocks behind it. As it pulled to a stop on the opposite side of the street twenty feet behind the ambulance, and its siren became quiet, the distant moan of a dozen sirens gave testimony to the search that was in full swing.

Jerry was rolled onto a stretcher and slid into the ambulance. Mac and his three men climbed into the police car,

and both car and ambulance sped away with a clash of changing gears.

As Mac's car gained speed the radio came to life and reported the finding of the abandoned prowler car. Soon they came to a stop in back of it and Mac took the report of the officers.

"When you first came to a stop and got out, was there a bus in sight?" asked Mac.

"Yes, sir," answered a young, uniformed officer. "It was just pulling away two blocks up the street."

Mac nodded, getting into his own car again. His three men followed him hastily, the last one barely making it as the motor came to life and the car darted forward.

They overtook the bus at Fifty-ninth and University Way. The driver vaguely remembered a man by that description, but was not sure.

Returning to the police car, Mac turned its nose back the way he had come, cruising slowly as he and his men scanned the sidewalks and sidestreets for some trace of the missing Jimmy. No luck.

Pulling to the curb opposite Wiseman's Cafe, Mac got out and crossed the street, pushing open the door to the cafe. The opening door bumped against a young woman whose arms were loaded with white sacks, causing her to drop one of them. When it hit the floor there was the sound of breaking glass, and coffee started to spread out of the paper sack over the floor. Apologizing profusely Mac hurriedly bought her some more coffee, then with a polite smile he dismissed her from his mind and went into a phone booth.

CALLING headquarters he ordered a net spread around the University district. That included a man on each bus as it went through the district. Then he sat down at the counter

and ordered coffee for himself. By the time it came two of his men had joined him, leaving one in the car with the radio.

They sat in silence for perhaps twenty minutes. Suddenly Mac uttered a disgusted expletive, and slapped his forehead angrily. "Of all the dumb dodos I take the prize." Then, as his men looked at him inquiringly, he went on, "That girl. I knew I'd seen her before. She works in a beer parlor downtown. She's been dragged in a couple of times in the last year. What's she doing out here? I'll bet that coffee I bought her was for Jimmy Higlin!"

"Maybe we can find her," his two stooges said almost in unison, rising hastily.

"Naw, come back here and sit down," Mac snarled. "That was twenty minutes ago. She's not on the street now."

He sat in silence, thinking, for a couple of minutes. Then, catching the eye of the waiter he ordered another cup of coffee. The other two echoed his order with a nod at the waiter's voiceless question. When the waiter left, Mac turned to one of them and said, "Go out to the car and order all the available plain clothes men and women on the force out here to conduct a canvas. I want every tenant in every apartment to be looked at. You know as well as I do how to go about it, so get going."

The three coffees came. Mac and the other man sat in silence, sipping the coffee and thinking—and waiting. In ten minutes the third man came back. "They're on their way out, Mac, and they've all taken a good look at the picture of Higlin and the one from the gallery, of Mabel. It shouldn't take more than an hour. There's twenty-one of them."

"Good," was Mac's only comment.

Looking at his wristwatch he saw that it was now eleven-twenty. By one o'clock they should have their man located. Arresting him would be something else.

It was much sooner than that, however, when a middle-aged woman came into the restaurant and sat down next to the three and ordered a coffee for herself. Lighting a cigaret slowly she pretended not to notice the impatience of them, but her face betrayed her. A smile of triumph forced itself against her will onto her pleasant but homely face, and she gave up her fun with a chuckle. "O.K., Mac. They're in apartment three-A, around the corner. I sold Higlin a subscription to *The Country Farmer*—a five-year subscription." She watched the waiter as he came with her coffee and continued talking. "I was very careful to explain to him about the thirty-day notice of change of address when he moves. It was sure—" she broke off as she turned and saw that the chairs next to her were now vacant. She shrugged her shoulders and picked up the cup of coffee the waiter set before her.

ACROSS the street Mac was at the microphone in his car, barking orders. The car was moving away from the curb while he spoke, and in a moment was around the corner parking across the street from the apartment house. Two of his men were just disappearing around the back of the building as his car came to a stop.

Mac stopped talking and waited. Very shortly five other cars cruised to a stop near his. Eight men got out of four of them and went into the apartment house. Mac followed them. As the street door closed on them the campus chimes started to play its twelve o'clock tune.

In the hall in front of the door

marked 3A they hesitated and drew their guns. Then Mac knocked. There was no answer so he knocked again, demandingly.

"Just a moment," came a feminine voice from the other side.

Mac tried the knob. The door was unlocked so he flung it open and walked in, his gun ready for whatever might come. Mabel was standing in the center of the room, a look of innocent alarm on her face, and not too much on her body. She seemed in the midst of getting dressed.

"Where's Higlin," Mac barked.

"Who?" Mabel asked. "There's no one here . . ."

"You know what I mean, Mabel. I know you. I want Jimmy Higlin or Jack Kilgore or whatever he calls himself. He killed that theater cashier the other day. You don't want to get mixed up in that do you? Come on, where is he?"

Alarm spread over her face and her eyes unconsciously turned toward a cedar chest by the bed.

Mac, quick to interpret the look, pointed his gun at the chest and said, "All right, Higlin, climb out of that cedar chest and don't start anything. There are seven of us and you don't stand a chance."

The lid of the box opened slowly and Jimmy Higlin stood up. There was a puzzled and horrified expression on his face. A look of recognition flashed over it as he saw Mac. There was relief in his voice as he said, "You're the officer who was in my room at home, aren't you?"

Mac frowned. "Do you remember how you got here?"

"No, I don't. One minute you were telling me I was wanted for murder. The next I heard you telling me to climb out of this box and not try anything. It's so funny." He brushed his

fingers over his forehead. "I—don't understand it. It's been happening like that several times lately."

The look in Mac's eyes changed to pity. Suddenly he put his gun in his pocket and said in a soft voice, "It's all right, Jimmy, boy. We're going to help you. You should have gone to a doctor when it first happened. Then there wouldn't have been all this trouble."

The men and Mabel looked mystified and stood in dumb amazement as Mac walked up to Jimmy and put his hand on his shoulder. "We're going to help you, Jimmy. You won't have to face it alone any more."

Jimmy smiled in relief. "I'm so glad of that. You don't know how hard it's been, trying to keep it all from my wife. And the way my money has been disappearing from my bank balance, I don't know what I'll be able to do about that."

"Don't you worry about anything," Mac said, taking Jimmy's elbow and steering him toward the door. "You just come with me."

Down below he helped Jimmy into the back seat of his car and then said, "Oh, just a minute, Jimmy. I want to speak to my men." He climbed back out of the car and went over to the group of mystified men. Speaking in a low voice he said, "I'm taking him to Harborview Hospital. Take this girl down and book her. I want to question her later. You and you," pointing to two of the men, "follow me. If there seems to be any trouble close in and pin my car to the curb if you have to to stop it. This time Higlin must not get away."

Without another word he returned to his car. The other men looked at one another in amazement, then went to their own cars. In a moment the street was clear.

DR. UNDERWOOD paused in his narrative. His pipe had long ago gone out, and in his concentration he had not noticed it. And as he searched in his pocket for another match, his audience stirred, as if waking from a sleep, a sleep in which they had experienced a fascinating dream. But no one spoke, waiting for him to continue. Apparently satisfied with the way his pipe was drawing, the doctor went on.

"All of this, of course, I have pieced together into a continuous narrative. In every detail it agrees with the facts of the case as they were collected by the very capable Mac, whom I gained as a very valued friend through our common interest in this particular case.

"There were and are many things about the case that are still a puzzle. Assuming for the moment that the soul or spirit or whatever you want to call it of Jack Kilgore, when he died, wandered around and settled down in the body of Jimmy Higlin for some reason, was it still there when Jimmy was himself? Or did it leave temporarily and return? And where was the soul of Jimmy during those periods when Jack Kilgore held sway?

"Oh, yes, there actually *was* a Jack Kilgore and he had actually been executed by the state. On my hospital case history the patient is diagnosed as being a clear case of split personality, the second personality being suggested to the subconscious mind of the patient by the newspaper article concerning the execution, and brought on by the diseased condition of his brain.

"When patients of that type have died, autopsy has shown a change in the brain. A sort of granular change has taken place in the brain tissue. The insanity is assumed to be the result and not the cause of the organic condition. But could that organic change be produced, not by a diseased condition, but

by a distinct *advancement* in the abilities and functions of the brain? We have so-called mediums who contact the *spirits* of the dead. Do their brains have the same condition?

"And where did the soul of Jimmy go during those periods when Jack Kilgore held the reins? I have hinted, in a way, at something there in my story, if you recall. Those hints were based on all I could get out of Jimmy about it during his two years as my patient.

"I naturally made every effort to gain the confidence and friendship of Jimmy. The doctor in a mental hospital must always do that if he wishes to succeed in helping the patient. At times he was Jack, and at other times he was Jimmy. And when he became Jimmy I tried to get him to remember where he had been, but with little success. I held off the shock treatments for six months in the hope that I could solve the mystery. Here in my hands was a mystery of paramount importance. A split personality whose other self was a man known to be dead. Not Napoleon or some fantastic personality. Not a name which meant nothing and could not be identified as an actual person. But a man who had been known, whose personality had been recognized as authentic in the patient. Jimmy had never met Jack in life, and he had no recollection of having even read about his trial or execution in the newspapers.

"THE only theory which could account for every known fact was that the soul of Jack Kilgore actually resided in James Higlin, and if I drove it out for good I would never be able to prove that it had been there. So, as I said, I held off the shock treatments. For six months.

"During that time it became apparent to me that Jack had gained the

upper hand. He was there, all the time, waiting and watching, and keeping silent, somewhere in the back of Jimmy's clear, innocent eyes. Like some creature of the jungle hiding in the shadows waiting for his prey.

"Twice Jimmy suddenly turned into Jack and overpowered his guards, only to find that he could not get through the several locked doors between him and freedom. Then he evidently concluded that it was useless. So he waited, and watched. Jimmy, when Jack did not interfere, was a model patient. Three months went by without Jack manifesting himself, so we allowed Jimmy more liberty.

"We, of course, allowed his wife to visit him when he was normal, and finally allowed the two to go for short walks on the grounds, always, at my orders, under the distant eyes of capable guards, ready to dash in if Jack suddenly took over.

"And every few days I spent the afternoon with him, patiently trying to lift the veil and peer into the depths. Trying to find out where Jimmy had gone and why—when he left his body. But I didn't get anywhere. He tried hard to remember, but couldn't.

"One day when Mrs. Higlin came to see him she brought a visitor. A Dr. Schwick. Not a recognized doctor, but a so-called quack. A self-styled drugless physician who proceeded to tell me that cases like Jimmy were quite common and very easily explained. I listened politely until he mentioned that he was an expert at hypnotism."

* * *

"You mean to say," queried Dr. Underwood, tapping his pencil nervously on the mahogany surface of his desk, "that you can hypnotize Jimmy and find out where he goes when he leaves his body to the caprices of the murderer, Jack Kilgore?"

(Continued on page 170)

READERS' PAGE

BOOKS FOR SALE

Sirs:

I have been a "fan" and collector of fantasy and occult books since 1927, during which time I have accumulated several thousand of books, many of the rarest that collectors are looking for. I have been thinking very seriously of going into the business of dealing in fantasy items this coming summer, using my collection as a start. Any readers of FANTASTIC ADVENTURES interested in getting fantasy, science fiction, occult, weird, etc. books, can write me and I'll be glad to send them a list of what I have on hand. Maybe I've got just what they want.

Stephen J. Takacs,
121 Freeman Street,
Brooklyn, 22, N.Y.

Here's your chance fans to get some fantasy books. Incidentally, we are always glad to help out fans who have books and magazines to trade or buy. If you have any such desires, just drop us a line.—Ed.

A PRETTY GOOD ISSUE

Sirs:

I have just received the May issue of FA. Enough said. But anyway, I've got to tell you about it so here goes:

"The Land of The Big Blue Apples," by Don Wilcox. Ah, Wilcox! The master of fantasy turns out another excellent story. The best in the book—naturally. It was really a thriller.

"Christopher Crissom's Cravet" by David Wright O'Brien. There's something about O'Brien's work that smacks of realism. His characters are as genuine as an apple pie. A swell story.

"An Adam From The Sixth" by Richard S. Shaver. Very good. I like Shaver's work very much when he leaves out the deroes. Let's have more like it.

"A Crystal And A Spell" by Chester S. Geier. Good. I like Geier very much, but I have never read any of his stories that could compare with his classic "Weep No More My Robot." Will Geier and William Lawrence Hamling ever collaborate on a novelette? (That's a not so gentle hint!)

"The Sword And The Pool" by Berkeley Livingston. Excellent in some parts, but poor in others. Not up to Livingston's usual high standard.

"Finished By Hand" by H. B. Hickey. A pretty fair yarn although the plot was not new. But it was handled well. Hang on to this author,

he might be a find if he keeps on writing.

Now for the artwork.

Cover—very good, as usual. It's nice to see the Mac girl again.

Interiors—Malcolm Smith takes first place for Shaver's story. Rod Ruth's illustration for the Wilcox masterpiece went excellently with the light of vein of the story. Will you ever have another cover by Ruth?

Enoch Sharp's drawing for the O'Brien story was not nearly as good as his illustration for "The Jewel Of Death."

Conclusion, an excellent issue, and well worth more than the twenty-five cents I shell out for it. (But don't raise the price, please!)

Oh, yes, your "Meet The Author" department is very good. How about a "Meet The Artist" section as well? What do your other readers say?

Jack Clements,
6310 Madison Rd.,
Cincinnati 27, Ohio.

Thanks a lot for the nice things you've said about FA, Jack. We're sure you'll like this issue as well. Drop us a line and let us know. As for Shaver, you'll be seeing him occasionally in FA—and minus his usual deroes! It only proves that Shaver can write a story with the best of them even when he isn't writing about the "caves."

Incidentally, what do you think of Geier's novel in this issue? You've asked for a longer length from Geier's pen, and here it is. As to Hamling, he's got a novel coming up next month that ought to satisfy you. And we'll make sure both boys hear of your suggestion that they collaborate on a story. As a matter of fact, we like the idea very much ourselves!

Your comments on Dave O'Brien bring back fond memories. . . . Dave went down in a bomber over Germany during the war.—Ed.

WE LIKE YOU TOO

Sirs:

I've just read the July issue of FA and I want to tell you it was a swell issue. What a lineup! Williams! Bloch! Hamling! O'Brien! Kelley! Shaver! Livingston! And every story was a gem! When, oh when are you going to go monthly!

John Sauer,
4809 N. Fairfield,
Chicago, Ill.

Just as soon as we can, Johnny! And rest assured future lineups will be just as good—they'll have to be because most of the boys you've mentioned will be included in them!—Ed.

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(Continued from page 167)

"Precisely," Dr. Schwick smiled triumphantly. He uncoupled his small, pudgy hands which had been locked together, in repose, on the upper terrain of his huge paunch. Leaning forward until his stomach rested on his lap, and extending his right arm toward Dr. Underwood, with one, pudgy finger pointed toward the ceiling, he said, "There are several stages to hypnotism. I call them 'sleeps.' Each subject, when hypnotized, must go through each sleep. The first is similar to that you enjoy when in repose. The second is deeper. Your mind is completely relaxed and under the will of the hypnotist. That is as far as ordinary hypnotism ever goes. BUT, there are two deeper sleeps that I have been able to produce. In the third sleep the subject hovers near his body. He can perceive it and be aware that it is his own. He can also see those in the room and read their minds. In that stage I make him promise that if I set him free into the fourth sleep he will return when I command him to. When he promises I put him in the fourth sleep. In that sleep his spirit is completely free of his body. It can roam where it wills, down into the earth or anywhere on it.

"And when I call him back he can remember where he has been. In the third sleep again as I bring him back, he can tell me where he has been. But, when he awakens he can remember nothing."

"That is very interesting," Dr. Underwood commented. "And you would like to try it on Mr. Higlin in an effort to find out where he goes?"

"Exactly," beamed Dr. Schwick. "I believe that Jimmy can will himself to the place he has gone, on occasion, and

come back and tell us all about it. I have a theory that he has learned how to enter the fourth sleep instantaneously. That his subconscious mind discovered how quite by accident. And that his spirit is so entranced by the life on the other side that it does not care too much about the consequences of its journeys to the unknown."

"Well, suppose you ask Jimmy what he thinks of the idea, Mrs. Higlin," Dr. Underwood said, smiling at her in encouragement. "It cannot be done today, of course. At any rate, I'm sure Mac would like to be here, and I would also like to have one or two of my fellow Psychiatrists present also." He arose in a gesture of dismissal and held out his hand to Dr. Schwick. "I am very glad to have met you, doctor, and hope Jimmy agrees to the experiment." Turning to Mrs. Higlin, he looked at her fondly, for he admired very much her devotion to her husband. "Perhaps you had better take only a half hour this morning."

Winny Higlin smiled bravely and nodded. Then turned toward the door, the paunchy Dr. Schwick following. As Winny opened the door, Dr. Underwood spoke, "By the way, Dr. Schwick, I just thought of something."

"Yes?" said Dr. Schwick, again facing Dr. Underwood.

"Ah—Just how do you think Jack Kilgore will react to all this?"

Dr. Schwick frowned in puzzled speculation for a moment. "Frankly, Dr. Underwood, I don't know. It all depends on one unknown factor." He walked slowly back to the desk and placing his stubby hands flat on the desk, leaned forward, a look of grave concern on his face. Then he said slowly, "It depends on the unknown nature of hypnotism. Is it the mind which resides in the tissue of the brain which becomes hypnotized? Or is it

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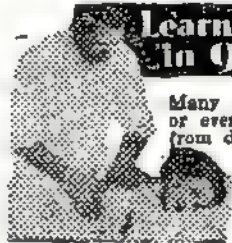
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the spirit or soul of the man? If it is the mind, then we don't have to worry about Jack Kilgore. If it is the soul, there is danger. Grave danger. It may be that when the soul of Jimmy departs under hypnosis Jack Kilgore will never allow it to return--this time."

THE room was about fourteen by twenty, its walls a glistening cream color, the windows sunken deeply, indicating the thick brick walls of a large building. Outside the windows were heavy bars. The floor was of varnished oak boards with wide cracks between them. Several small rugs were distributed haphazardly on it. And on the rugs were about a dozen folding chairs of the cheaper variety, also varnished.

Seated in the folding chairs were several men and a woman. They were all gazing intently at one spot. In that spot there was a varnished armchair, and seated in the chair was Jimmy.

There was only one light on in the room, a dim, thirty-watt globe hanging from the ten foot ceiling slightly behind the spot where Jimmy sat and directly above two, white-coated husky attendants who stood alert, their eyes never leaving the seated man for an instant. The feeble light from this globe played on the features of Dr. Schwick, highlighting every wrinkle and line of his forehead. His eyes seemed to shine with a light of their own as he gazed in concentration into the eyes of Jimmy.

The doctor was talking slowly and softly, his deep voice sounding like the muted tones of an organ. "You will relax completely, Jimmy. Slowly, slowly your mind is getting drowsy and your eyelids are getting heavy. You want to sleep. You want to sleep so-o much. Your eyes are closing. You can't keep them open." In a deep monotone his voice went on, and though it did not

vary in its almost inaudible tone, it seemed to grow and grow until it was a living, dominating force that pulsed throughout the room, pounding against the very minds of those who watched.

Jimmy's eyes dropped until the lids half hid the eyes. Then they closed. In a moment Jimmy took a deep, noisy breath and expelled it slowly.

The doctor pulled a white handkerchief out of his hip pocket and wiped his forehead. Turning to the audience he said, "That is the first sleep. Now I will send him deeper."

He turned his attention again on Jimmy and spoke. "You are now asleep, but you can hear me, can't you?"

He paused, and the voice of Jimmy came slowly and with great effort, "Yes, I can hear you."

"Now you are going to sleep deeper than you have ever slept before. You are going to sleep so deeply that you can't feel your body, nor be aware of anything except my voice. In a moment I am going to stick a pin in your arm and you won't know when I do it. There is nothing in your mind except my voice. It is the universe and there is nothing that exists except my voice. I have stuck you with a pin and you did not know it, did you."

JIMMY'S lips parted. He tried to speak. But he was too numb. "No," the doctor spoke for him, "you did not even know it, because there is nothing in the universe except my voice." The doctor was silent for perhaps five minutes. Jimmy sat relaxed, his arms resting on the arms of the chair, his head resting against the back. The two guards behind him had beads of perspiration glistening on their foreheads and their eyes were wide and staring as if they too were hypnotized. But they had been warned that the crucial moment was coming when Jack



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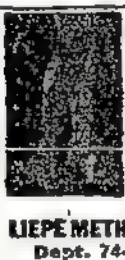
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Kilgore, the second personality might take over. There was danger here. Danger they must watch for and prevent if possible.

Winnie sat on the edge of her chair, her eyes darting from her husband to the hypnotist and back again, her hands nervously wringing her white gloves and unwrining them, her whole body tense with worry and excitement.

Dr. Underwood and his two colleagues, and Mac were in various positions, their eyes all intent on the drama going on before them.

The feeble light globe cast its scant rays over the scene giving the room an air of unworldliness seemingly alive.

The drone of Dr. Schwick's voice began again. "Now, Jimmy, you are going to leave your body and stand beside it. It is easy to do because you can no longer feel it. You are separate from it and can step out of it. But you can talk through it can't you? Turn and look at it. You can see it, can't you?"

Slowly Jimmy's lips parted and he said, "Yes, I can see my body. I am standing beside it."

"Now, Jimmy, look around the room. Walk behind me and tell me what I have hidden in my hand from the view of your body." He quickly pulled his comb out of his coat pocket and held it behind him.

"I am standing behind you now, doctor," Jimmy's voice came from his body. "You are holding a comb."

There was a sound of quickly in-drawn breath from the audience.

"Now, Jimmy, Dr. Underwood is going to think some sentence slowly and distinctly and you are going to read his mind and tell us what he thought." There was a moment of silence. Then Jimmy's lips moved again. "Dr. Underwood thought, 'This is an unbelievable situation'."

Without turning Dr. Schwick asked,

"Is that correct, doctor?"

Dr. Underwood's voice came in a whisper, "Yes. That's right."

"Now, Jimmy, I am going to set you completely free of your body after you give your solemn pledge to return when I call you. I want you to go where you have gone before and learn where it is so that you can describe it to us. Will you do that?"

"Jimmy's lips opened in a half smile, 'Yes, I promise.'"

"All right. Go, Jimmy." Abruptly Dr. Schwick stood up and turned to the others. In a normal tone of voice he said, "I am always thirsty when I go through this. Where can I get a nice cold glass of water,—or something more refreshing if it is available?"

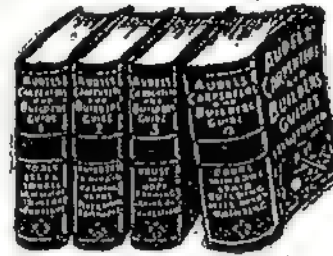
THE abrupt change in atmosphere was disconcerting to the others. Dr. Underwood blinked for a moment and then managed to stutter, "Why, ah, I—I'll see what I can scrape up. Ah, what would you like? I'll phone over to the hospital store and they will bring it right over."

In a few moments they were all enjoying themselves, more or less, over a cold bottle of cola, and discussing what had taken place.

"I can't believe even yet that he has left his body," one of Dr. Underwood's colleagues said. "How do I know he read the doctor's mind? And even if he did, that could be explained as thought transference. So could his telling you what you hid behind you."

"I agree to that," Dr. Schwick said, evidently enjoying to the full his "day" before the recognized medical profession. "But you must not forget that I have had experience with this before. One time I released the spirit of a woman from her body and she traveled..." and he continued on his lengthy and detailed narrative for a half hour while

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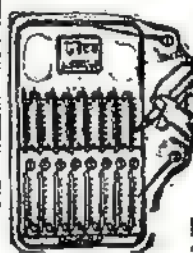
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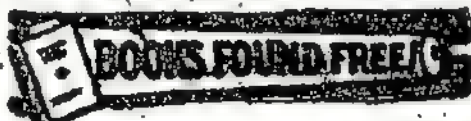
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the others listened politely. He was
having his "day," all right.

When he finished he looked at his
watch and realized it was time to bring
Jimmy back. He waited until the others
were seated again, and then turned
back to his subject.

"Come back, Jimmy. Come back
and stand by your body. Are you
here?" He paused and waited for a
reply. None came so he repeated his
call: "Come back, Jimmy. You prom-
ised. Come back."

Finally Jimmy's lips opened slightly
and quivered perceptibly, but no sound
came for a moment. Then, hollowly,
the words came. "I am here."

"Where have you been, Jimmy?"
asked the doctor eagerly. The others
were sitting forward on their chairs,
their eyes wide.

"I—have—been—I—don't—know.
The—people, they—are—different.
Like—us—but—different. They—are
—in—trouble. I—should—go—back
—to—them."

"No, Jimmy. You must enter your
body again. It is there beside you.
Enter it Jimmy." The doctor spoke
commandingly.

Suddenly Jimmy's body shuddered.
The two attendants leaned forward on
the alert, but Jimmy's body relaxed.
Then the hypnotist spoke soothingly.
"You are now back, aren't you,
Jimmy?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I am back."

"Now, listen to me, Jimmy, you must
never again leave it unless I let you.
Do you understand? *Never leave it
again.*"

"I understand." A look of inde-
scribable sadness came over his face.

"**N**OW, Jimmy. You are going to
awaken. You can feel a tingling
in your body. You can feel the beat of
your heart. You can feel your chest

move as you breathe." The doctor paused dramatically, then suddenly snapped his fingers. "Wake up."

Jimmy opened his eyes, looked at the doctor, and then let his gaze wander until he saw his wife. He smiled at her. Suddenly they were in each other's arms. Her hand was stroking his hair and she was crying and smiling.

* * *

Dr. Underwood paused in his story, and laid his pipe down. He looked at the other guests. A look of mental suffering appeared on his face. Suddenly he seemed to age ten years. Then he went on.

"That night Jimmy's mind broke. For three days he raved. His temperature became excessive, though he had no physical disorder to cause it. He raved continually about having to go back and save them,—whoever 'they' were.

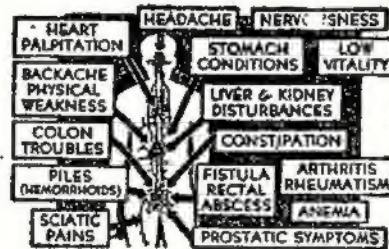
"On the third day he became calm enough so that we could give him the shock treatment. He responded slowly, so that the full three weeks series of treatments had to be given. But he came out all right.

"Six months later the court released him. He is now a respected member of society and a great architect. So far as we know Jack Kilgore disappeared from Jimmy's body during the treatments. At any rate he has not shown himself since then, and I keep in touch with the Higlins from time to time.

"As I said at the beginning, I wonder if there is anything called insanity, or whether *all* so called insane people are really devil possessed. I don't know, and I have tried to answer that question for ten years. Every case I have dealt with could be explained either way,—as possession by spirits, or by the accepted explanation of simple derangement of the mind. And for the life of me I can't honestly say which is correct."

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THE LOST COLONY

BY JON BARRY

A TALE OF GREENLAND

ONE of the strangest disappearances recorded in the annals of history is that of the Western Settlement in Greenland. It had been a thriving community, a republic for over 270 years—many more years than these United States were organized as such. Trade between that country and the European mainland prospered during the Middle Ages—and then suddenly at about the time that Columbus discovered America, all traces of the white population seemed to have vanished.

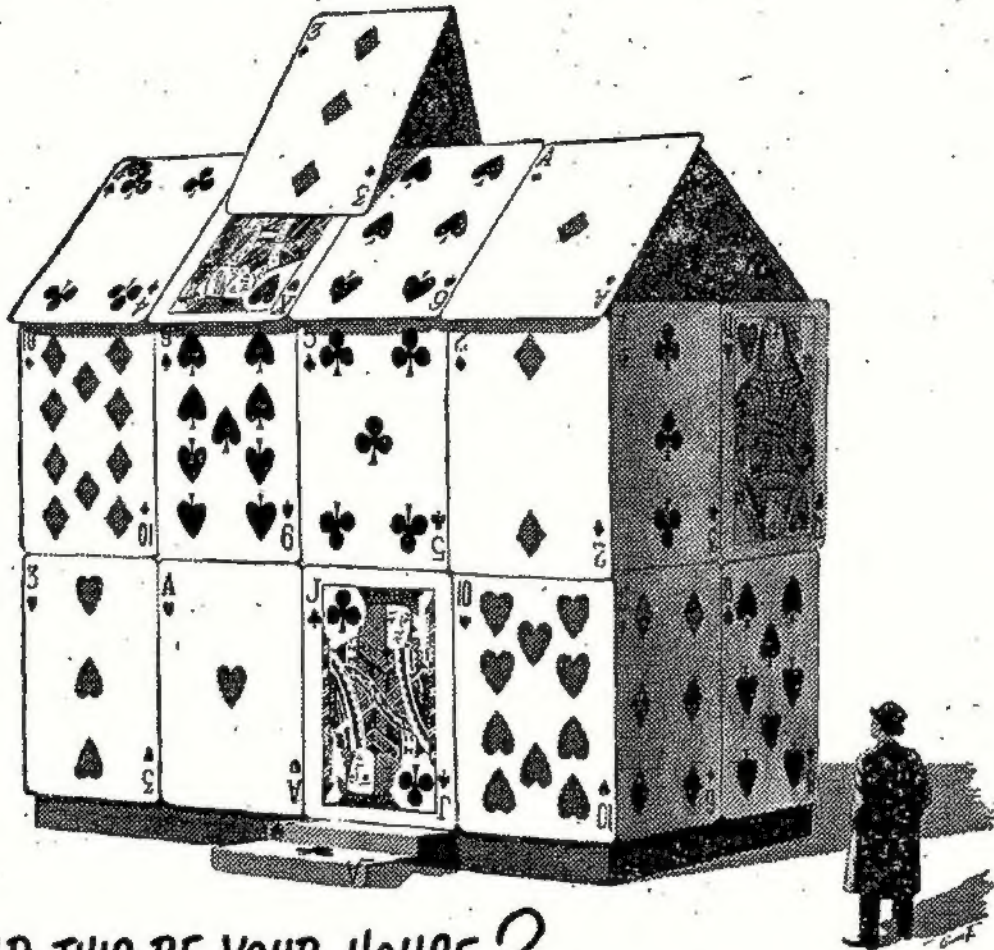
Scientists studied this riddle from all possible angles. Their work on the subject fills several thick library volumes and contains many conflicting opinions. Church records proved most helpful in revealing the probable time of the community's disappearance. The records of the Church of Rome show that the country was constituted as a separate bishopric in 1124, and that the chain of bishops remained unbroken until 1537, when the last of them, Vincentious, died. The last published Church document which dealt with the colonies on the western shores of Greenland was written by Pope Alexander VI in 1492.

Life in Greenland at the height of prosperity, which was perhaps in the twelfth century, was similar to life in Iceland. The government was a democracy; the people were busy farming, hunting, and carrying on an extensive trade with Europe.

Somehow, all 9,000 residents of the Western Settlement vanished; the church lost all contact with them, trading stopped—and several years later when hunters wandered into that part of the country, they found the area deserted. No living beings inhabited the land, although the remains of their civilization, the farm buildings, were still to be seen.

At first the Europeans on the mainland assumed that the Black Death which had taken such a toll of the world's population had struck there also, but then the fact that so many of the native Eskimos had been spared that fate seemed to refute the theory. A Danish investigator, Gustav Meldorf, puts forth the belief that attacks were made upon the Greenlanders by European pirates who exterminated the entire population and made off with their wealth. And still another theory has it that the white inhabitants of the land adopted the culture of their Eskimo neighbors and then intermarried and were assimilated so completely that they had no recollection of their European heritage.

Only one fact is certain. The colony faded out of existence in such a mysterious fashion that this episode out of the pages of history remains one of the unsolved riddles of the Arctic.



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